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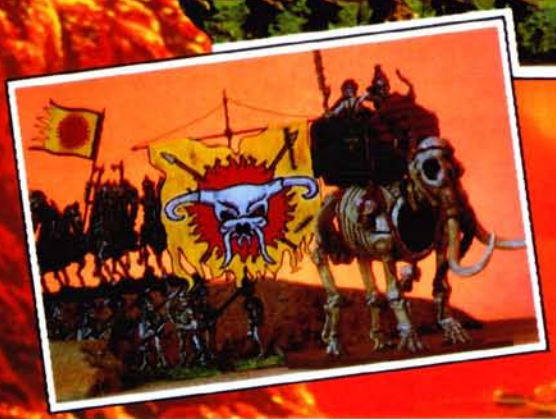

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THE SUPERIOR FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION GAMES MAGAZINE

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Editorial

BY the third issue of a specialist publication like **Adventurer**, you don't expect to diversify your subject content. Well, that is exactly what we have done: By adding an extra 16 pages, we have managed to gain so much room that this issue sees the launch of two new comic strips, a regular fiction feature and an SF column. The comic strip (Whiplash) in particular is breaking into new territory, and should be a welcome addition. After all, we are getting these extras at no increase in price. Also, this is the first 'theme' issue of **ADVENTURER**, bringing you the best of the nastiest. A hearty welcome is in order this month to Mike Willis, Ian Marsh, Wendy Graham, Stewart Johnson, Warren Ellis, Hudson Shaw, Alex Bardy, Ben Goodale and Wayne anonymous, who all Join the Adventurer team.

Ste Dillon.

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TUNNELS AND TROLLS

SOLO ADVENTURE GAME BOOKS

FIREBIRD

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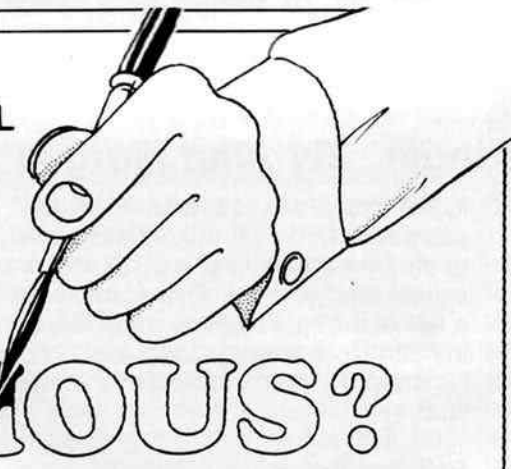

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The Song Of Loeul

A scenario for Stormbringer. By Alan Morgan

"Three brothers in a windy land
Far beyond death's cold hand
Serving their sister tall and grand-
Who waits high on the hill
When shall she vacate her nest?
Only when one brother is laid to rest.'
--first verse from the Song Of Loeul

Background:

A complex psychological look at the lore of the Dharzi in the world of the STORMBRINGER game, this scenario is of a straight-line plot, ie the players should be encouraged to stay within the plot as far as possible. Experienced referees should be able to improvise if the players digress from the plot, but it is by no means an easy task!

When the armies of **Melnibone** laid waste to the area now known as the **Silent Lands** during the wars with the **Dharzi**, they left the work incomplete: several small bands of the tall, thin, wicked Dharzi survived through the use of sorcery. They lived on through pacts with chaos, use of arcane powers, herbs and such, and with the dawn of the **Young Kingdoms**, many lived on still. Chaos is now on the slow downward slide, and with the lessening of chaos, the reduction in sorcerous power followed; without this power the Dharzi must find another way to extend their survival. This scenario is a tale of the fight by three members of the Dharzi; **Asrogag**, **Lathuzial**, and **Naztragath**, three brothers in a windy land.

Referees Notes:

There are several possible scenario openings for the characters, some suggestions follow, but the author wishes to stress that referees are encouraged to integrate this scenario into their own campaign. It may provide a welcome diversion from the usual campaign adventure, or parts of it may be incorporated into a larger adventure.

Scenario Openings:

1.The Church Of Law: The Church has received disturbing reports of an increase in the amount of wild magick in the Silent Lands, and intends to send a small team to investigate. The mission is primarliy one of investigation, although if the cause is isolated, the team are to subvert it. The church will provide a bounty of 150 LB on the head of "each creature of chaos" revealed, plus a booty thereof (aside from all taxes/tarriffs for importing foreign wealth of course...). The church will provide passage on board 'The Dream of Kirsty', a merchant craft to pass **Serpents' Teeth** and send along a noble, Lady **Catherine De Medichi** as leader.

2. Mercenary measures: Queen Yishana of Jharkor has been worried by the increased piracy of her sloops around the **Serpents' Teeth** area (Map A). She has also heard reports of sorcery. The following notice has been seen in all major towns and cities throughout Jharkor:

> "Be it hereby known that our royalle highness, **Queene Yishana** is funding an expedition to the wycked south to stop grayve acts of pyracy and pillage upon our country. Pay negotiable.
> **Apply**: Palace, Dhakos in 2 weeks."

The pay for the complete mission is 50 LB, though clear-minded characters may negotiate with dramatic effect. Passage is again secured aboard 'The Dream of Kirsty' and Lady Catherine is the royal representative.

3. Sorcerous means... It is widely known that the Dharzi have many ancient and powerful artefacts, and Jason Ha'aarkna of PanTang is greatly interested when he learns of the apparent resurgence of the Dharzi. To this end, he is sending his disciple, Catherine De Medichi with a small party of adventurers to 'recover' a few items for his studies. The party will be contacted and led to Jason's small house, where the deal may be struck. Ha'aarkna will forward great sums of money and suggest the party buy a ticket on 'The Dream of Kirsty', seabound this evening. He adds that his personal valet, Catherine, will be there to accompany them at all times. (Referee: Jason does not want anybody to tell of their discoveries, and on their return, the players may well have difficulty getting out of Dhakos.)

Dream of a Lady:

'The Dream Of Kirsty' is a fair sized ship in typical Jhakorian 'box' style, over 20' greater in length than the standard merchant vessel; it holds only 2 passenger cabins. Catherine will insist on having one cabin as her own- she has hired 5 mercenary marines from the Purple Towns to back up any decisions she makes.

Two days out of harbour, slightly NW of **Sorcerer's Isle**, the players will be alerted by the shouts of the watch in the stern and Crow's Nest of the ship: visible to the port side is a large,

scaled back! One of the crew will make the sign of Law in the air and cry "Sea-Wyrm!". The wyrm is one of the lesser dragons that used to infest the northern Dragon Sea. Now, she is only one of a pack of three, and her 6 cubs are camped almost directly below the ship...

The Sea-Wyrm is 25' in length and will attempt to sink the ship by smashing it's head into one side. Roll d6. A 1 means she has succeeded; 2-4 means the ship is damaged and no doubt taking on water; 5-6 means the wyrm glanced off the side of the ship. The best method for defeating this monster is to strike between the eyes with missile weapons, or to jump (heroically) onto it's flat head and strike 2-3 times with a large axe between the eyes. Eventually, the wyrm will sink below the waves (causing problems for anybody attempting to mount it!). Murmers of "ill-fate" begin rumbling around the superstitious crew. To add fuel to these beliefs, a ferocious storm will beset the voyage that night, causing the ship to be driven onto the cruel rocks at the southern end of the Serpent's Teeth.

The Hollow Land:

The characters will awaken after a severe battering on the grey gravel shores of the Silent Lands. There is no animal life in evidence, and apart from the players and Catherine, there doesn't seem to be any survivors.

Sitting cross-legged on a stone slab on one side of a hillside sits a hooded, cloaked figure. His light grey leggings and boots, the tip of a shortsword and his lute are the only visible signs to suggest that there is more beneath the cloak...calmly he will look at the players and with a giggle recites the first verse of the **Song of Loeul**, and introduce himself as **Naztragath**. He is about 4 feet in height; a dirty, twisted beard and long greasy hair hides much of his grubby face. Players should be allowed Music-lore rolls to see if they can remember anything of the Song of Loeul, and sorcerers of rank 3 or above should be allowed an intelligence roll to see if the name Naztragath triggers anything; a success will recall a long-dead Dharzi lord by that name.

Naztragath will offer the players the hospitality of his home for this evening and the night, and they should be encouraged to agree (if not, Naztragath will warn them of the dangers of the place they have arrived at...). The walk to the 'house' is in fact very short, but constant twists and turns confuse the trail somewhat. The path consists of loose grey grass in blue clay, cold bleak swamp stretching in all directions and a cold, old wind whistles through the clothes and freezes the spirit. Not before time, a final hill will be breached and there lies the house...

The House of Darzi:

The house is a 3-storey, tower-design surrounded by a large mass of blue swamp. The only method of entry seems to be across a dark, baroque bridge between the tower and the main gate a short distance away. A light blue-grey smoke swirls around, disrupting the landscape. It smells of dead vegetation. Through the mist, a distant hill can just be made out. Gaily, Naztragath skips down the pathway towards the little bridge. He turns to look at the party, giggles, and disappears through the gates. On the other side (if the party chooses to follow), a Hunting Dog lurches to its feet, tied to the wall with stout red-rope. It's head, instead of the usual canine variety, is that of a vulture! The rope is strong, however, and the players quite safe.

A large door opens inward to a tall fluted hall. An open fire rages and three high-backed chairs rest nearby. On one of these, Naztragath is seated, his cloak now removed. His giggling increases as he bows in a mock theatrical manner to any ladies present, and kisses each on one hand. Looking around the room, players will notice several large volumes on one shelf with titles in High Melnibonean ("Bestiary of the Beasts"; "Tome of the Enchantment of the Minor Beasts"; "Herb Lore and the Art of Age Regression" and so on). Paintings on the wall show four people with "Naztragath. Asrogag, Lathuzial and Loeul" inscribed in Low Melnibonean underneath. It may be noticed that all four have thin white faces, golden almond eyes, slightly scarlet flecked eyelids and long creamy hair. The pictures look very old indeed. Naztragath will show the players to their rooms, informing them that dinner will be served "whenever it is ready".

The players' rooms are all pretty much the same; a large bed, chair, table, shuttered windows. Although the linen is fresh, the beds do not look as though they have been slept in for years, the air is stale and stagnant. The trunk is full of old clothes, fresher than the rest of the room, of several sizes, qualities and fashions. There are one or two weapons in the bottom of the trunk. If any player chooses to leave his room, the dinner bell will sound from above the rooms, and Naztragath will shortly arrive to escort the players to dinner.

Descent into Dinner...

The stairway twists at an awkward angle, not allowing the characters to see into the hall until the last moment. Two figures clothed in dusty cloaks and heavy hoods and cowls greet the players with silence. The first is dressed in brown robes with black boots and gloves inscribed with runes of silver thread. The second, slightly taller, is dressed in a white tunic and light grey garments, a delicate thin blade wrapped in a black scabbard. The scabbard is decorated with raised gold runes. As the characters approach, the two will pull back their hoods to show thin faces covered by filigree silver masks. They dust themselves down and stalk to the next room, where large plates of vegetables (no meat..) are laid. Naztragath will introduce them as his brothers **Asrogag** and **Lathuzial**, giggling slightly as he does so. The swordbearer, Lathuzial, angrily stalks over to his small brother and hits him sharply about the head, pours himself a large goblet of wine and toasts the party with "eat and be damned!". Pouring more wine, he laughs and stalks off outside. The players will no doubt feel a little uneasy about his behaviour, but Asrogag (the third brother) will comment that he "is merely attending to his hounds...rather like the old days!". Naztragath leaps up to follow his brother shouting "You'll pay, Lathuzial. It's almost time now, Little Lu is coming back to me Lathuzial!! just you wait, big brother!"

He leaps onto the table and sings in a lilting tone the first verse of the Song of Loeul. Asrogag hurries out of the room, calling for Lathuzial and Naztragath adds, *"But what of the bodies he has raised. How then shall these bodies be slayed? Why only with the heart fathers blade!"*

At this, Lathuzial will re-enter with his sword drawn, blue flame burning from its edge, and pointing it at Naztragath shouts "No more of your evil sorcery brother! Come with me!" Naztragath is hustled out into the cold beyond. Characters attempting to follow will find a Hunting Hound barring the door.

If questioned about the above matters, Asrogag will apologise, explaining that his brother had a serious accident several years ago, causing his obvious severe mental illness. Bidding the characters to be seated, he glances nervously at Catherine. For her part, she has been responding very anxiously at the proceedings, having drawn her weapon at one point. Asrogag, in a bid to ease the atmosphere, asks if the party have any concerns; most questions can be answered by the referee, although Asrogag will endeavour not to give too much away. His replies to specific questions which, if the players do not ask, Catherine should ask (or hint at asking), are as follows:

Q) Who are you?

A) I? I am Asrogag the third Lord of

the Cold Lands. Our father decided that his four children should have equal shares in the power that lies in this valley.

Q) What means your brother when he says 'its almost time now?'

A) I believe he means the day of conjunction is almost upon us; he has strange beliefs which I do not share...

Q) Where is Loeul; your sister I believe?

A) I would rather not talk about her my...friends. (If asked again) Very well, since you are obviously anxious to know. Loeul was our sister. She possessed great power and when the Dragon-lords came to raze our race and release our hostages, she tried to stop them. Naztragath was caught when an accident happened high on the Tor... Now, if you have finished with these tiresome questions, I would prefer to retire to bed.

With this, Asrogag escorts the players to their rooms to retire. Protestations will be met with a cough, in response to which the hounds will howl. Once his duties as host are complete, he will return downstairs to study one of the books in the hall.

Sweet Dreams...

The characters, rather than sleeping as they are advised, will doubtless spend the night investigating the house. Catherine will not be found in her room. Opening the other doors on the landing will reveal the following rooms, in order:

Library: An imposing doorway and large decorated frame, the library is locked, but not strongly enough to sway a determined picklock. Inside, a large room holds great works of literature and fiction, are all very old and musty, and many are in a bad state of repair. Written in a form of High Melnibonean, they describe ways to control the various minor demonic Beast-Lords, a great book on Pentagrams and Octograms, Signals of Protection, ingredients and cures for the state known as 'Death', etc. In short, the room is a necromancer's joy. Dominating one wall is a large map, showing a valley in livid colour, a marked house and 2 straight lines crossing upon a hill to the north. In high Melnibonean, the inscription "Weylines of Xiombarg" accompanies other formulae along the frame. These describe the conjunction of the planets and the stars that signify when a 'gate' will be open between this plane and the 'sphere of Crom Gruach'. A closer examination will show that several of the books have been removed hurriedly and not returned. On the wall, only 3 portraits are hung, similar to the ones downstairs but dated 'In the year of 6883 of the life of the Bright Empire of the Dragon Princes'. They are obviously pictures of the 3 brothers, but are a lot older than the paintings downstairs.

Laboratory: Also on this floor, in a small room without windows, lies a great mass of bubbling instruments, seemingly extracting the juice from a blue apple-like fruit, though this is severely bruised. A successful Plant-Lore roll wil reveal that the fruit is the 'Keernai' of the Forest of Troos, with limited healing powers. Rumour suggests that it has powers of preserving living organisms for many centuries. A further search of the room will reveal several brown robes in a chest in the corner. Burn marks on the gowns betray acid splashes.

Stone Chamber: A room devoid of all other ornamentation aside from a single sorcerous octagram which lies on the floor. In the centre of the 'gram lies a shattered circlet of dark iron, the image of a cat on the frontpiece, now cracked in half, and the runes for Meerclaw (lord of cats) along the edge. A sorcerer should be able to establish that this room was the chamber used for the summoning and binding of powerful demons, and the circlet would indicate that Meerclaw was once held as prisoner, but someone or something released him. There seems to be little or no traces of the Entropy mark in the room, indicating that it is at least several hundred years since the binding was broken. Of course, the only people ever to bind Meerclaw were... the Dharzi! That is absurd, however, because they all perished-...didn't they?

A Rude Interruption:

From downstairs, a scream will erupt. Hurrying to investigate, the party will see something flash into the dining hall from the main room. Catherine, dazed, stands clutching at her throat in terror, her sword lying some distance away. Blood begins seeping from her fingers and from her sack she attempts to unravel a bandage, though unsuccessfully. In the next room, a confused-looking Asrogag quickly throws a liquid into the fire, where it flares up briefly (See rolls will inform the players that the liquid is blue, not red as they might think).

The party's reaction to this scene will range from slight suspicion to outright condemnation. Asrogag will protest his innocence, claiming to know nothing of the event. A few prompts from the players should get him to admit that he saw something fly through and out of the kitchen. He will refuse to say more except "She will get me if I say any more". At this point, Catherine will begin to moan, clutching her neck. Blood starts to flow again, and she seems to be suffering from a fit. Her eyeballs swivel, and her hair stands on her head and blows in an invisible wind. The door at the end of the hall slams open and the howling wind rushes in, tearing shields from the walls and tapestries from their mountings. Laughing hysterically, Catherine takes a short sword from the wall and begins dancing around the room, singing in a deep, lyrical voice:

"Poor little piggies lured to death,
Set to free me from my rest.
Eternal life, eternal hell.
Live or die? Whom can tell...?"

A hasty 'see' roll will show that on her upper right arm is an intricate piece of jewelry. As she sings, this will glow more fiercely. Laughingly, she will walk through the door and into the night. If attempts are made to stop her, she will fight with demonic strength. If followed, the characters will lose her in the mist.

Asrogag will break down and sob in his mask. Observant players may notice that the newer, plundered tapestries are left intact; those of the Dharzi Lords are now merely fragments of brown cloth and metal. Asrogag reaches for the nearest character and, tearing his mask from his face, begs for help.

Beneath the mask is the face of a worm-ridden corpse; no smell and barely any movement, the lips fail to move when he speaks, yet the voice issues laudibly.

"They are trying to bring back our little sister! They think she has the power to take them to a world where they will live on still. Do something!"

A giggling erupts from the upstairs landing, where Naztragath stands, leaning on a silver dagger. If pursued (Asrogag will remain downstairs and go into the yard to pursue the possessed Catherine.), he will escape into the library. When the door is forced, there will be no trace of him inside.

If any character reads High Melnibonean, and notices the large heavy bound book protruding slightly from the shelves, then he/she will be aware that it is entitled "Artes of the Myore"; in fact, it contains the formulae for transferring from one room to another, the "Fhoi Myore". Removing any more books will reveal a large carved face in a blue door. It is a **demon of protection (Con:30 Pow:23)**, with no power of speech. Built into the mouth is a small birdcage device; a tiny gilt bell suspended in the air. The door will open when the command "Fhoi Myore" is given. If a question is asked of the face, the bell will ring 3 times for yes, twice for no, and a single tone indicates the inability to answer. The players should discover this function by experimentation. The demon is there mainly as a delaying tactic, but

opening the door will lead to the inner chamber (successful characters should skip the following paragraph, emerging at the passage detailed 'UNDERGROUND').

During this time, the dogs have become restless. If they don't get the hint, the sound of Asrogag screaming will tell the players that something is amiss. Investigation will lead the players to the yard and reveal 3 Dharzi Hunting Dogs below, ripping the Dharzi-Lord to shreds. The scent of the characters will divert them from the dying Asrogag (fresh young mortal meat being far more preferable to mortified flesh!). They will only give up their attack on the players when faced with fire or many wounds. However, they are trained to go for Melniboneans or sorcerers; any others just get in the way. The only method of getting past the dogs is to kill them all (very unlikely), or escape to the small door across the yard, leading into another part of the house.

Underground:

A long, winding corridor leads the characters through great mounds of ash and dust, the recent imprints are all too easy to follow...

The area is obviously old, leading downwards through thick-walled corridors, to an open stone doorway in the floor. The passage widens at this point, beyond the range of a normal candle or torch, though if the area beyond is investigated, the party will find great rows of dead Dharzi, fully armoured and prepared for battle. Their dented armour and broken weaponry speaks more of the remains of battle. The corpses are in fact, corpses; they have no necromantic power of relife in them, and are no threat to the party. Of course, the players may not be quite so confident... The passage levels out and eventually begins an upward slope at a steep angle (navigation rolls will reveal that they are roughly below the hill seen through the mist earlier. Intelligent players will remember the chart on the library wall showing the 'Tor' and weylines, etc.)

Eventually, a heavy stone door will end the route; the footsteps peter out at 3' in front of the door. A dripping tap is heard from beyond the door. Scuffling footsteps are then heard, followed immediately by the dousing of candles; lanterns smash as stones fly at them. A great rush of feet will erupt and small hands grasp at the characters.

These are **Svarts**, the small remains of the mabden populace that once dwelt in the Silent Lands before the Melnibonean/Dharzi Wars, and fled to the burrows beneath the earth. What the players have stumbled across is the remains of their once-proud race, which Loeul and Naztragath buried underground as punishment for crimes which all have since forgotten. Their hands are noticeably weak, and fall away easily once hit with a hand or weapon. Stones and slashing flints will cut the characters with remarkable accuracy in this dim light, but once a light is made, the small creatures will scuttle back into the shadows. Crouching in the darkness, they will defend themselves as best they can. If in fear for their lives they will beg in a high whining voice for mercy, proclaiming "we didn't means to 'tack your royal Darsi sirsss!". If pressed, they will open the door, but if the Svarts believe the players to be acting against the Dharzi, they will immediately offer their assistance, acting as a bunch of 'groupies' to their new heros. They really are very simple folk. Their leader is **Myayella**, a fairly human-looking woman, though totally blind and with slightly webbed fingers. Begging and grovelling, she will lead the players through the doorway and onto a rock ledge overlooking the inner Tor, a cavern containing an altar, pentagram and other paraphenalia associated with necromancy, the walls lined with upright corpses in open caskets.

From this vantage point, the players will witness Naztragath sneaking up behind his brother Lathuzial, who will turn and draw his fine sword. This response is too late as the deformed dwarf Naztragath clubs his brother unconscious. With great difficulty, the smaller brother will haul the unconscious Lathuzial onto the altar and tie him down. Stepping inside the pentagram, Naztragath begins to chant, and more and more light floods into the room with every chant. From here onwards, events will be described as they would happen without interruption from the party. As the dwarf chants, light will glare off the rock and psychadelic patterns will shine off the far wall. Slowly, he will bring the knife down to his struggling brother's throat, then continue to chant. In the background a cold wind develops, and ice and snow begins to form. A tall, cold figure attempts to emerge from the shadows.

When the players do respond (and providing she is still around...), the possessed Catherine will charge from the darkness, sword in hand, the armlet still glowing. Myayella will use air-elementals to hold back any blows aimed at her, but will otherwise be only good for hurling rocks and guiding the players through the darkness. As soon as the interruption occurs, Naztragath will shower a silver dust around the tomb. It is called Liveer-'Lass, and with this, several corpses will rise to defend their master.

If his deterrents are overcome, Naztragath will scream horribly and dash to the other side of the altar, raise his

hands and summon 3 tall creatures of Limbo, who will walk through the cold to aid him. These are Ghouls, and whilst they take no damage from normal weapons, will rêtreat before Lathuzial's sword *(How then shall these bodies be slayed? Why, only with the heart fathers blade).* If these are defeated, or retreat, then the dwarf will hurl himself at the characters, witch-knife raised... he will fight to the death. If the dwarf's minions are not defeated, Naztragath will plunge the knife into Lathuzial, the blood will stain the altar and a deep bell will sound. In either case, a brother has 'died', and out of a tapestry on the rear wall, a tall white woman will emerge, soft snowy hair falling to her waist.

If the players fail to stop the dwarf from killing Lathuzial, Loeul will assist him in bringing about the party's destruction (see stats. below), otherwise Lathuzial will react in one of two ways:

a) Disturbed by the resurrection of his dead sister, he is disgusted by the perversity of his brother's actions and assist the players or

b) Happy to see his beloved sister 'alive' again, he will come to her defence against the party.

Lathuzial's reaction is based on how well he was treated by the party, and the discretion of the referee. Whatever the outcome, both brothers should eventually be killed off, Loeul will pick up her dead brothers, and slowly chant the complete Song of Loeul:

"Three brothers in a windy land
Far beyond death's cold hand
Serving their sister tall and grand-
Who waits high on the hill.
When shall she vacate her nest?
Only when one brother is laid to rest.

Four remnants of the Dharzi lore
Three peers in a musty Tor
Three to join the old Fhoi Myore-
The fourth lies stiff and still.
When shall this eventide be nigh?
When the Sidhi rise too high...

And so the Cold Lords rise from Hell
To wreck what misery, who can tell
Until by Corum who will fell-
In ages yet to be.
How shall the Fhoi Myore come to be?
When the Dharzi are set free...

To join their brothers, Goim and Kerenos
For when Fhoi Myore gain; Dharzi loss
To destroy trees, plants and moss-
A world bereft of life
Millions of lives lost in future days?
All because of thy murderous ways..."

Loeul will turn and walk into the landscape, trailing her two dead brothers behind. Their forms shimmer as they pass through the shadow, and grow lumps, humps and other deformities. Unless the characters attempt to do something about it, the gate will close and leave the characters in darkness. Myayella will try to get the players to leave, but investigation will reveal the corpses of the disappeared crews and passengers of the lost ships. At that instant, Catherine will begin coughing and attempt to stand. She looks normal again, the armlet and sword have vanished.

The party now have the problem of getting home, to tell their tale and explain Catherine's injuries as best they can.

Fin.

Appendix:

Catherine De Medichi

The Daughter of the Duke of Thokora, Catherine came into her own when her brothers and father died during the attack on Menlibone. With no one else left to manage the estate and with the progressive views on women in power brought about by the new Queen Yishana, she made a huge success of managing the estate. Despite many offers of marriage, she has refused all for one reason or another (many say it is because she is a sorceress and consorts with demons-after all, how else would a woman make such a success of business?). Catherine has thus developed the estate to a point where it is almost running itself, and so turned to her other pursuits; theology and sorcery. Both subjects conflict as her 'uncle' Jason Ha'aarkna is outlawed by law. Her sympathies tend toward Arkyn.

On this scenario she will be acting on behalf of either the church of Arkyn, Jason, or the Queen. The Statistics in brackets are Catherine when Possessed.

STR: 14	CON: 13
SIZ: 13	INT: 16
POW: 10	DEX: 11
CHR: 14	AGE: 29

HIT POINTS: 14 (32)
MAJOR WOUND LEVEL: 7 (16)
ARMOUR: 1D8-1 (Half Plate)
1D4-1 (Toughened Skin)

Weapon	% Hit	Damage	% Parry
Broadsword	72	1D8+1+1D6	64
Target Shield	34	1D6+1D6	59
Light Lance	54	1D8+2+1D6	NA
Shadowswathe	65	1D6+1+3D6	65

Shadowswathe:
(Daemonic shortsword picked up in hall)

STR: 30	CON: 18
SIZ: 2	INT: 2
POW: 15	DEX: 60
CHA: 20	

COMBAT BONUSES:
+15% Attack/Parry
+3D6 Damage.

Eclipse:
(Daemonic armlet of Possession)

STR: 0	CON: 20
SIZ: 1	INT: 15
POW: 22	DEX: 0
CHA: 30	

Demon of possession, provides a direct link to the binder (Loeul) so as to act through a captured body, was slapped onto Catherines upper arm in the struggle. Appears as a very beautiful piece of thick jewelry, possesses the intelligence to sing when the binder's life is in danger. After Loeul leaves, it needs to be rebound to work once again.

Naztragath

The youngest of the four children who escaped the destruction of the Dharzi empire by Melnibone, he and Loeul were the pair who made a pact with **Grome** to hide their valley, at the cost of his sanity, and the loss of Loeul. His trauma has left him only remembering that he has to keep the altar fresh with sacrifices, and that one of his brothers has to die on the altar for his sister to be returned to him.

Whilst his brothers kept themselves alive with sorcery and herbs, he turned to vampirism on the guests, which caused mental instead of physical degeneration.

STR: 17 CON: 15
SIZ: 5 INT: 19
POW: 28 DEX: 14
CHR : 5 AGE: ?
HIT POINTS: 11
Major Wound Level: 6

Weapon	% Hit	Damage	% Parry
Dagger	43	1D4+2	47
Shortsword	60	1D6+1	64

Notes: After feeding, Naztragath possesses inhuman speed; his Dexterity is raised by 3 X Victims' Dex for roughly an hour.

Hunting Hounds

The houndsmaster, Lathuzial, had only three hounds left by the time this scenario took place, the fittest and best he had. However, lack of the hunt and proper exercise has had it's toll on these huge creatures, the only thing driving them on is lack of food. Meat is scarce in the Silent Lands, where the Dharzi long ago caused the loss of animal life and it's freedom.

STR: 20 CON: 18
SIZ: 15 INT: 5
POW: 15 DEX: 18
CHR: 4

Weapon	% Attack	Damage	% Parry
Claw	45	1D8+1	10
Beak	60	1D6+	

Attacks are by literally jumping on characters. Once successful all three hounds descend upon the one character and attempt to rip into pieces small enough to devour, unless they are distracted.

Svarts

Once the original Mabden inhabitants of the Silent Lands before Melnibone rose to prominence, and the Dharzi had a great empire away to the West. The Svarts were cast into darkness when their main cities were covered by great waves of earth. The survivors were those who got into larger buildings, those with chimneys that still led to the surface for air. These survivors then built their city. Naztragath found this city and managed to get the Svarts to burrow a passage to the Tor's inner cavern.

Over the centuries, the generations of Svarts have regressed in technology to the stage where metal is treasured and flint is essential. They have adapted in various ways, their eyes are extra sensitive to light. The majority of the race are small, weak creatures acting on instinct alone to survive. I suggest you create your own group to suit your needs. Bear in mind that the leaders of the community are those most human like, the human form vaguely remembered as their original shape.

STR: 2D6 CON: 3D6
SIZ: 2D6 INT: 2D6+2
POW: 4D6 DEX: 3D6+4
CHA: 3D6

Weapon	% Attack	Damage	% Parry
Flint Weapons	35+	Variable	40
Rock	40+		

Myayella

The daughter of the current warlord, Myayella is a mutant amongst her people in that she possesses feline eyes that can see in the light and dark (though not so well in the dark as her peers). Almost human. Myayella is to be banished on her 17th birthday in a month or so, and when the team come along she sees it as a chance to get out. Myayella is a product of her mother's meddlings in sorcery (she died in childbirth), and has thus gained a little skill. It should be noted that after the scenario, Myayella will stay with whomsoever shows her the greatest kindness.

STR: 10 CON: 14
SIZ: 10 INT: 14
POW: 19 DEX: 16
CHR: 17 AGE: 16
HIT POINTS : 14
Major Wound Level : 7

Armour: 1D6-1 (Thick Leathers and Fur)

Weapon	% Hit	Damage	% Parry
Flint Axe	55	1D8+2	44
Sling	35	1D6+	

Other Skills:

Agility-Climb: 45%, Jump : 45%
Swim:50%
Manipulation- Tie Knot: 35%
Perception-Balance: 60%,
Listen: 45%, Scent: 60%,
Track: 43%
Communication-Sing: 67%
Stealth-Hide: 33%,
Move Silently: 68%
Knowledge First Aid: 30%,
MusicLore: 53% (Lyre, Flute),
Plant Lore: 30%,
Poison Lore: 30%, Painting: 45%
Summonings-Air Elemental: 50%

Undead Ancestors

The long dead ancestors, or rather peers, of Naztragath raised by his Necromancy to hold off the characters. Not very agile, the bodies only stop attacking when they have been hacked to pieces, under the armour.

STR : 16 CON: 14
SIZE: 17 POW: 6
DEX : 8 Hit Points: 19
Major Wound Level:10 (in this case ignore results of 01-50)

Armour:1D101 Full Plate plus Helm (battered)

Weapon	% Hit	Damage	% Parry
Various	35	Various	NA

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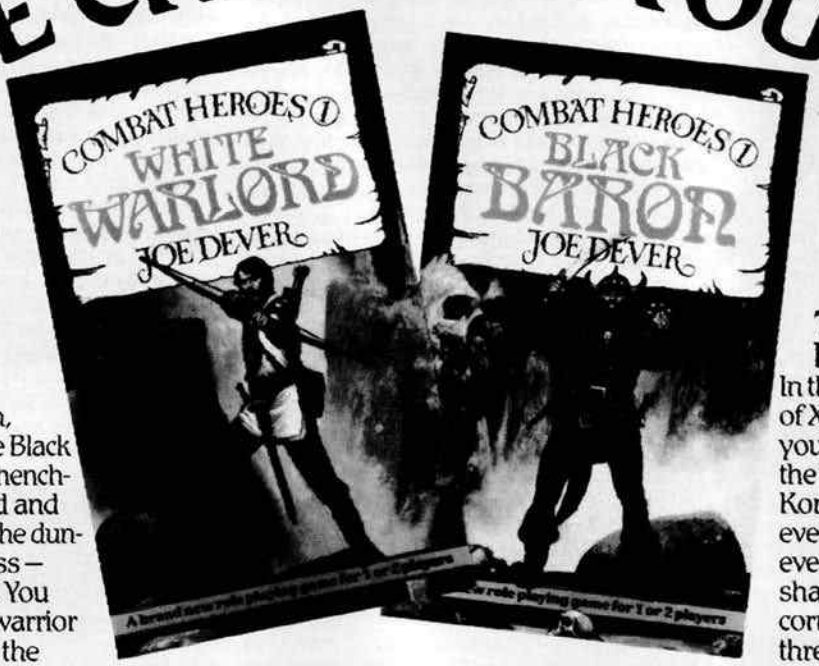

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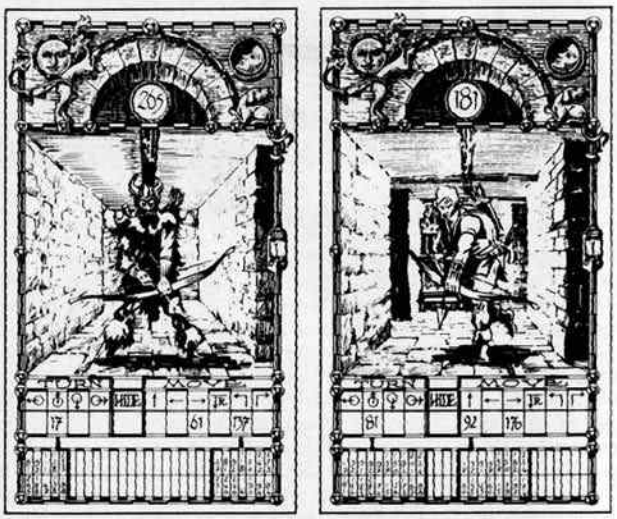

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TWILIGHT 2000 (£14.95)

by Game Designers Workshop

It is 2000 AD and the world has been at war for 5 years; after sporadic nuclear bombing, most major cities are in ruins and vast armies have been reduced to a handful of men and tanks. Central governments throughout the world have virtually ceased to exist, and civilization is falling apart. To make things worse, **NATO** and the **Warsaw Pact** are still waging war. This is the somewhat depressing, though very plausible, setting for GDWs role-playing game.

Characters represent one of the remnants of the U.S. 5th. Division, which was destroyed at the Battle of Kalisz in central Poland. Their initial aim is to escape from the victorious Russian and polish forces, whilst at the same time avoiding bands of marauders, militia, starvation and disease...times are hard in 2000 AD!

The game itself comes in the now familiar box and consists of a play manual, a referees manual, players and referees charts, equipment and price lists, record sheets, a campaign map, set of dice, and a beginning adventure with player handouts.

The Play Manual deals with **character generation**, which consists of a combination of dice rolls to generate physical attributes, and a points allocation system to "buy' various skills. I liked the idea of giving characters with weak physical attributes more military experience points to allocate; it makes the game more evenly balanced.

Further rules cover age, rank, starting equipment and coolness under fire- a character with a high coolness rating may hesitate or even panic at a very critical moment! Incidentally, although the premise of the game is that characters are nominally in the U.S. army, they can be of any European nationality, since many units have become intermixed.

The second half of the play manual deals with travel, upkeep and fatigue and then moves onto combat. This is quite straightforward, all atacks being resolved by three dice rolls to determine success, hit location and damage done. A note of warning to all potential Rambos- the weapons statistics reflect the lethal nature of modern armaments, so be careful where you're pointing it!

The Referees Manual starts with further rules on skills and combat including skill improvement, explosives and vehicle damage. The middle section covers encounters, with a useful section on generating the motivations of non-player characters. Further chapters deal with radiation and disease, before finishing with the background to the war, and the current dispositions of Warsaw Pact forces throughout Poland. I found the **background** especially fascinating as the 'history' of the war follows some quite unexpected but well-reasoned directions.

All the charts and tables necessary for play are concentrated on a single sheet for the players, and an 8-page booklet for the referee- a useful idea which ensures fluent play.

The beginning adventure "Escape from Kalisz" is a little sketchy, but with some work could make a useful starting point for a campaign.

The rules overall are quite complex, without being complicated, and are fairly easy to follow for someone with a little experience; a complete beginner, however, might have some difficulty. The standard of production is very good, although some of the artwork leaves a little to be desired. There are a couple of criticisms; the use of abbreviations is rather awkward at first, and the amount of starting equipment for characters seems **excessive**.

Twilight 2000 is really a role-playing war game, and should appeal to fantasy gamers looking for something different. I would also recommend it to wargamers who feel that fantasy games are a little unrealistic for their tastes.

Mike Willis

THE BATMAN SOURCEBOOK (£7.75)

By Mayfair games for DC Heroes.

Of all the comic-book heroes I enjoyed as a child, **Batman** is certainly in the top three. I have felt for a long time that he would make the ideal character to role-play: Heroic, upholder of law and Justice, relying on his human skills as a detective and a crimefighter, and not too powerful. Thus I was excited when the Job of reviewing this weightly volume landed on me. An 80 page book, packed with background information and NPC stats, slavingly researched and lavishly written by **Mike Stackpole**; his love for the subject runs obviously throughout.

The first half of the book is devoted to the statistics, history, background and personality of The Batman, his friends and allies, and his foes. Most major NPCs have a full page of explicit details, from **Nightwing** to **Ra's al Ghul**, including their origins and development in The Batman tales; personality, driving force and their strengths and weaknesses. Possibly the biggest hurdle to overcome when playing/designing a superhero game is that of mood. With super-Powers in abundance, the game is often debased to a level of silliness found only in the most immature D&D games. However, by choosing The Batman as the central character, Mayfair have managed to capture a whole new level of seriousness — few super-heroes have been observed with such psychological depths to provide a thorough under-standing of the man behind the mask. It is with this serious intent that other major characters are detailed, from the subtlety of Ra's al Ghul to the comic awkwardness of the Mad Hatter. Each character is illustrated, and accompanying the 'Game Stats', their personal history, methods and personality are detailed, with accompanying notes for role-playing the character as an NPC.

The second section concerning Batman's equipment and vehicles, gives a system-related breakdown of such Bat-Aids as the Utility Belt, Batarang and Batline, and the game stats for the Batmobile, Plane, Copter and Batboat. Following this are two cases for the Batman to solve, each consisting of a plot, NPC stats, maps and encounters, both well designed and easy to referee. An interesting (though brief) article on designing villains and their headquarters takes the reader, step by step, to the origin of **Shadowmask**, leading on to the first adventure in an attempt to thwart this drug-dealing upstart. The article itself is pointed at the referee, in a plea for more realism through design and fore-thought. The scenarios are aimed at 2-6 characters generated using 2000-4000 Hero Points, or the equivalent of the JLA without Superman. In real terms, the first adventure is designed for The Batman and The Outsiders, the second adventure is a Batman/ Referee head to head scenario.

The accompanying maps of Wayne Manor, Wayne Foundation Building, Penthouse, and, of course, the Batcave, add to the flavour and detail of this innovative publication.

To summarise, **The Batman Sourcebook** is exactly what it sounds: background information and technical details; a reference work of great value to anybody wishing to play the part of Batman, or interested in his friends and foes. An advantage to DC heroes players is, of course, that the game stats make such information readily useable by the GM. Players of other Super-Hero games should not be put off, however, as this is an excellent piece of research, well supported with illustrations and plenty of detail.

Ste Dillon.

RAVAGERS OF TIME (18) AND DRAGONS OF FAITH (DL12) AD&D SCENARIOS BY TSR.

~~I~~8 is a module for 8th to 10th Level characters. Inside the cover are well drawn, clear maps of the area and major buildings found in the module. 8 pull-out pages contain details of the main NPCs, giving notes on appearance, personality, usual clothing, equipment and full statistics. It uses **Unearthed Arcana** spells, magic items, comeliness and cavaliers. There are also full magic-user spell books, instead of just memorised spells.

The storyline is set in the Ffenarch, a dismal area of bogs sprinkled with some bits of firm ground. There has been a murder, and the party are drawn in to help solve this. Since this is AD&D, this is no simple murder mystery, though there are clues for the party to investigate, and some problems to be solved by other means than brute force. DMs with players who are fond of combat should not be put off because there are plenty of monsters for them, and a few nasty surprises.

The scenario gives enough background for the DM to keep it running smoothly, and presents the main storyline in five sections, in chronilogical order. These are well laid out and the DM should have no trouble keeping track of what's going on where, and to whom.

DL12 is a different matter. This is the twelfth module in the Dragonlance series, although it is only the tenth playable Dragonlance scenario. The cover has the usual character cards for the pre-generated characters, plus two new characters, one of whom is a new Kender. Also on the cover is the usual combined monster statistics chart and a map to show where the action takes place, though I have no idea why the land is a shade of pink.

There is a large sheet of maps showing various locations in the adventure, but the city map is not numbered despite there being numbered locations given in the text, and one of the buildings is given a different name on the map sheet than in the module. The other side of the sheet has a large map of the main battle area, for use with the BATTLESYSTEM™ rules, and there is also a sheet of good quality counters for underwater creatures.

Another additional feature is a sheet of TALIS™ cards, and the text gives details of how to use these to predict forthcoming events during the adventure as well as for games of chance..

Dragons of Faith continues the Dragonlance story from about a month after the party leaves the elven forest of Silvanesti, until sometime after they leave the city of Istar. This module departs from the style of previous Dragonlance modules, in that it gives a lot of general background information for those areas that are not in the main storyline, and allows the characters a lot more freedom in how they reach their eventual goal.

There is a lot going on, with various sub-plots for the characters to get mixed up in, some of which will reward them with useful information. Fortunately, DL12 does not have the complexity of DL10, though the DM still has a lot to keep track off. There are sixty-four pages in the module, though sixteen of them are pull-outs, including character cards for twenty NPCs.

The prologue gives the background and the story so far. It also gives an overview of the way things should procede in this module, which the DM will need to refer to on more than a few occasions. Although there is a lot of freedom for the characters, they are still given plenty of guidance to get them back on the main plot, should they stray too far. There is also enough given for the DM to run a whole series of mini-adventures around the main plot.

The character should be led to the undersea city of Istar, where the sea elves are under threat from an undersea part of the dragon armies. If BATTLESYSTEM™ rules are used, the major underwater battle above and around Istar can be run, for which new rules are given. Even after this, the module is not over, for there are more battles to be fought, and the characters have still to discover one of the most delightful buildings I have seen: A tower constructed by gnomes, and those of you who have read the Dragonlance books, will know something of what to expect.

Overall, both these scenarios are worthwile; I8 is a well-balanced, interesting adventure for a medium to high level party, and DL12, although expensive, is a pleasing continuation of the Dragonlance saga, though it does not work as a stand alone module. John S. Davies

NEW FIGURES:

A selection of 25mm figure releases have landed on my desk (desk? – actually in my cardboard box behind the door!) since last issue.

From **Grenadier Models UK** come a fine new range of dwarves, eighteen models in all in six blister packs. These are the first figures designed by the ever popular **Nick Lund** for Grenadier and are the first Grenadier figures to be both manufactured and designed in this country. All the models are in a 'chain & leather' armour and are armed with a variety of weapons from the compulsary dwarven axe and hammer through to swords, spears and bows. They certainly look like they mean business, all grim, steely eyes and 'come and get me if you dare' postures. The animation is beautiful and the detail crisp and clear. My particular favourites are sets 3 & 6, **Dwarves with axes and Dwarven Heroes**, the heroes especially are quite breathtaking.

I also have it on good authority that amongst other new Grenadier offerings which should be in the shops by the time you read this will be a **unicorn** (apparently a big shaggy one) with a maiden riding side saddle. Also available will be an **Orcish Giant** and an **Orc Chieftain**, both mounted and on foot, a set of three **Viking** types and a **Samurai command** pack featuring a general seated on a stool and his bodyguards. The most novel new set should be the **Undead Scouts** (roll over Baden Powell!) comprising a skeleton huntsman with his skeletal dogs.

From **Citadel Miniatures** come new additions to several of their ranges. On the Dwarf front let me introduce the new **Chaos Dwarfs**. These come three to a blister pack with the now familiar '**Slotta Bases**' and plastic shields. The style is almost cartoon-like with exaggerated features. One with a crossbow is a caricature of Stallone as '**Rambo**', and one with an axe is a dead ringer for Bugs Bunny's old enemy **Yosemite Sam**!

New to the **Judge Dredd** range come the **Angel Gang**, again a set of three figures featuring **Judge Child, Link and the Fink**, all instantly recognisable from the pages of **2000 AD**.

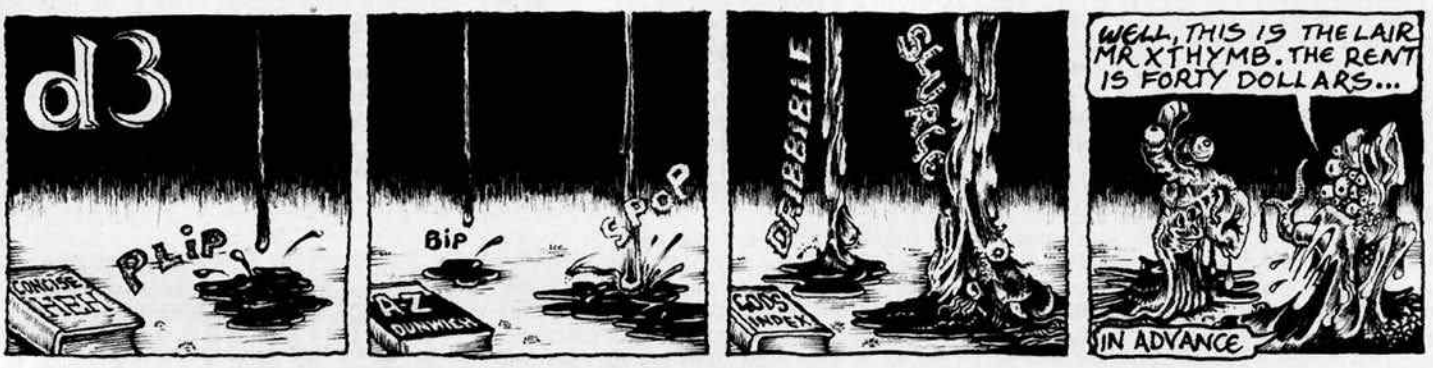
In the **AD&D** range come some new orcs, fierce as we come to expect from Citadel but one personal point, and this goes for the dwarves too, I do think that the large plastic shields detract somewhat from the quality of the figures and I much prefer the more traditional integral metal shields.

A new coding in the Citadel catalogue is the OH range, a new selection of Oriental Heroes. OH1 denotes **Ninjas** clad in the familiar face masks, and subtley armed to the teeth. OH2 are proud-looking **Samurais** in traditional costumes and armour. The figures again come three to the pack.

For Science Fiction gamers we have a space freighter in the **Star Trek** range (not to 25mm scale I might add!) and for players of Traveller, Space Opera etc. a very hefty 25mm **trooper in power armour**.

Last but not least there are new figures for the popular **Talisman** game including a **Ranger**, **Gladiator**, **Philosopher**, **Merchant**, and **Necromancer**, all finely detailed and full of character. Appealing as these figures are it still seams strange to me having special models to use with board games. Still, I look forward to the player character personality sets for my trusty **Monopoly!**

MARTYN TETLOW.



CONFIDENTIALLY FOLKS . . .

Sean Noonan, Games Workshop's conventions organiser, is the latest employee of the company to have been sacked. Sean took over from Paul Aagard, and until recently has been operating on the convention schedule left by his predecessor, The Sheffield Dragonmeet, which was the first Sean had chance to organise himself, didn't go as well as expected and is probably the main reason for his departure. I have my suspicion that the flip 'Chaos Death Roadshow' catchphrase was also influential since it largely denigrates Citadel's range-naming policy.

As yet, no replacement for Sean has been appointed, and this casts doubts on the likelihood of Games Day taking place this year. The indication is that this year the event will be replaced by a one-day Dragonmeet, and Games Day will eventually take place in Nottingham sometime next year.

This could leave **Koancon** as the only major convention for this year. This takes place over 22nd-24th August at Warwick University (just outside Coventry). The intention is to provide a residential, fan-run convention along the lines of Games Fair, ie. it's about games, games, games! There should still be time to book if you're quick. Residential tickets cost £29.50, non-residential tickets £9.50, with cheques payable to Koancon and send to; Koancon, 53 Towncourt Crescent, Petts Wood, Kent, BR5 1PH. Guests of honour include Dave Langford, professional scatologist, and Pete Tamlyn, accomplished haruspex, and of course I'll be there...

A PROPER HATCHET JOB

Hatch, a company formed by three ex-Games Workshop employees, will be producing second edition **Middle-Earth Role Playing** and **Rolemaster** in the U.K. Their licence will see an end to the current non-exclusive distribution of MERP. The aim is to get the entire ICE range in print within two years. Hatch's current intent is to release four to six games each year, as well as one or two ICE products each month. MERP is provisionally scheduled for September release, and Rolemaster for October.

Also in the pipeline are two boardgames; a whacky goblin chariot racing game, complete with hobbit or elf bait, and a licensed game based on James Clavell's Shogun.

Albie Fiore, the driving force behind Games Workshop's games development for many years, together with **Ian Bailey** and **Ian Waddelow** are the brains behind Hatch, and their aim is to produce a 'premium range of quality-conscious games'.

LIVING DANGEROUSLY

After the demise of **Treasure Trap** and **Timescape**, the live role-playing craze suffered something of a depression. Now, however, this aspect of the games industry is booming again, with **The Labyrinth Club** at Chislehurst Caves, and **Mythlore** in the Forest of Dean. Mythlore also make latex masks for their monsters which are available commercially. They were proudly displaying these at the London Dragonmeet, as well as some splendid monster costumes.

Labyrinth can be contacted at 77 Hinton Road, Herne Hill, London SE24 0HT, and Mythlore are at Unit 37A Morelands Trading Estate, Bristol Road, Gloucester GL1 5RZ. Despite taking over Chislehurst Caves for adventures, Labyrinth have no connection with the late Treasure Trap 'other than having lost money to them'.

NEXT ISSUE: Issue 4 will be a special detective issue for all your budding sleuth characters. Mind-bending scenarios, fiction from Hilary Robinson and articles calling for a more deductive approach to role-playing. Imagine Sherlock Holmes, Mike Hammer or Mrs. Marple scouting out a necromancer's lair and you'll get the message...

by Ian Marsh, ADVENTURER snoop extroardinaire

GREAT, SUPER, DC

Games Workshop have always maintained that no-one holds the rights to distribute DC Heroes in the U.K.; Contrary to this Games (Liverpool) and Virgin have been stocking it for several months. It would seem that the game's popularity has at last made Workshop reconcile its differences with Mayfair Games, and as a result DC Heroes will be more widely available.

Golden Heroes should undoubtedly get the boot in the process, with support being wound down once modules still under way (like **The Lancelot Caper**) dissappear from production schedules. Modules planned for DC Heroes in the near future include **King of Crime** (Flash's Rogues Gallery) and **Legion of Super Heroes 2: The Worlds**; No dates on these at the moment, but King of Crime is due out in the States in August.

Champions hasn't been forgotten in ICE's take over of Hero Games, and the Coriolis Effect is the first module to bear the ICE name. Production and artwork are a tremendous improvement on previous Hero scenarios, and the magic-oriented scenario caters for normal and excessively powered characters.

For Marvel Super Heroes there is MHAC9 **Realms of Magic** (£7.50), an extension to the basic game which has more rules than the basic game! It's about magic, as practised by the likes of Doc Strange, and it ties in with Advanced MSH. Production of advanced MSH has been put back, and we can expect a September arrival if we're lucky, August if we're not....

HILLTOP BLUES Tom Meier, the American figure designer formerly known for his Ral Partha designs, is heading back to the States. The consequences of the director meets girl, girl meets boy triangle is purported to be the reason for his hasty removal from Citadel. There will be no more new figures by Tom from Citadel.

HORROR OF HORRORS

The July releases from Games Workshop include the Call of Cthulhu hardback. Combining the third edition rules with the Cthulhu Companion, and only costing £9.95, it should prove an attractive buy for all Cthulhu fans.

Hardback versions of West End and Chaosium Games are high on Games Workshop's priorities, and Paranoia and Stormbringer will Meta- morphose into this format soon. Warhammer roleplay, AKA **WARPS**, still hasn't got a definite title: 'Chaos mutant death undead hobbit samurai ninja role playing' is my tip for the top (and if you believe that.....)

THESE FOREIGNERS ARE CRAZY

The French translation of The Dark Eye, a German role-playing game, has sold over 50,000 copies within six months of its release. Already a great success in Germany, the game is doing well amongst novice gamers because of its clarity and ease of use. Transworld are the licence holders for the U.K. translation, but have already been refused by Games Workshop on the grounds that the translation is very poor. Gallimard, who distribute L'Oeil Noir in France, also publish the French translations of Fighting Fantasy books, sales of which now rival Penguin's.

The Japanese have also taken to Fighting Fantasy, and will be printing Warlock magazine, issues 1-5, and should also be taking the later issues from Workshop. Japanese D&D probably suffers in comparison to Fighting Fantasy because it is printed from left to right (the Japanese read from right to left).

TSR TIDBITS:

Unearthed Arcana 2 has been cancelled, but the **Dungeoneers' Survival Guide** is still determined to appear. A respectful pause please whilst I remove one sock to help count up the number of AD&D books now available. The DSG is intended to bring the AD&D game up to date, much along the lines of Oriental Adventures. Hurrah! **Picked up by penguin** TSR (UK) will not be stocking the Dragonlance books much longer. Penguin now has the rights to the entire series, although I suspect the intention was originally that TSR should be allowed to distribute their own books as well.

FACTS ON FIGURES: **War Trolls follow hot on the heels of Nick Lund's Dwarven Warriors as Grenadier Models (UK) expands its ranges. Three trolls, each costing £1.50, are available, with a selection of weapons (stone club, cutting weapons, and smashing weapons) and shields for each one. All of these are wonderfully ugly -- uglier than Ste Dillon**, as one hobby wit cracked. British casting of American figures continues with more Dragon Lords dragons (chaos, shire, and swamp), and Fantasy Lords figures. The Fantasy Lords range includes a real masterpiece, **Undead Scouting Party**. This comprises a skeleton warrior with spear and three skeletal dogs. Marvellous! - cute undead figures!

DID YOU KNOW? Fan magazines appear to be the key to success in the game industry. **Steve Jackson** and **Ian Livingstone** produced Owl and Weasel before moving on to White Dwarf. **Brian Ansell** (Citadel/GW) edited the first few issues of Trollcrusher. Of course, being a one-time editor of a fanzine doesn't guarantee success: I edited Dragonlords, and look what happened to me!

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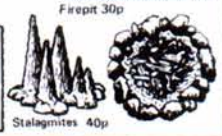

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5. **Bushido** (FGU)
6. **Runequest 3** (Avalon Hill)
7. **Ghostbusters** (West End)
8. **Palladium RPG** (Palladium)
9. **Paranoia** (West End)
10. **Twilight 2000** (GDW)
11. **Rolemaster** (Iron Crown)
12. **Basic Star Trek** (FASA)
13. **Pendragon** (Chaosium)
14. **Expert D & D** (TSR)
15. **Masters D & D** (TSR)
16. **Marvel Superheroes** (TSR)
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Adventurer Club

The winner of our LOGO competition last issue was Sharon Delaney (Ipswich):

"As he raced across the silver bridge, striding out for fame and adventure in his quest to rid the dome of chaotic daarks, **BORIS THE BOLD** was struck by an invisible foe; an arrow of cold shot through his naked legs and iced it's way to his inner core.

The mists are clothing the secrets of this cold, evil place: a hagged figure stoops over the fallen hero, a black, frozen shape seems to envelope him. A curse cries out! A shrill, piercing cry from a watchful hawk above, and the dark ice-witch scurries away with spikey fingers clutching a winged helmet. The adventurer is left to perish.

Through the mists, a tall, slender girl approaches - she wraps him in a golden fleece which glows with a mistclearing warmth. She disappears to follow the witch-foe. A hawk cries out from above as the adventurer awakens, lost and confused but able to walk, able to fight on!"

The old woman sat back and sighed "That is all I can tell you, stranger. The rest you must find out for yourself"

And I, Boris The Bold one, smiled, and the spell was broken, and my quest began anew!!

Adventurer Club members now total over 200, and they should now be receiving their newsletters, club membership cards and badges.

Paul Goddard: If I may be allowed to address your readers, I would Just like to say that if your stance is to be believed, we have at last the opportunity to offer constructive criticism to the manufacturers of the games we use – I have a few choice words I'd like to say about TSR, and so it is up to the readers to put pen to paper and not only make this magazine print what we want, but also make the manufacturers treat us with some form of respect, instead of using us as their meal-tickets.

One way in which Adventurer Club can be of service, of course, is to print honest-to-goodness gripes, Paul. I wouldn't want this page to turn into a complaints section, but any member with serious complaints or points to raise will get the opportunity within this club page. One member has already taken advantage of this opportunity:

Jonathan Geere (Daredevil Adventurer): Runequest is now known for it's extremely high cost rather than it's superb quality. The cost of the game could be drastically reduced if it was printed in the UK. My plea is for the RQ fans or admirers to write to Games Workshop or the Avalon-Hill game company to ask them to try again to negotiate for the game to be printed in the UK. It would be a great pity to see this great game go into oblivion because the respective companies can not make the effort.

It seems to me, Jonathan, that your wish is to be granted, for latest news that I have indicates a low cost starter-pack for Runequest 3, printed and distributed in the UK by TM games (formerly Avalon-Hill UK).

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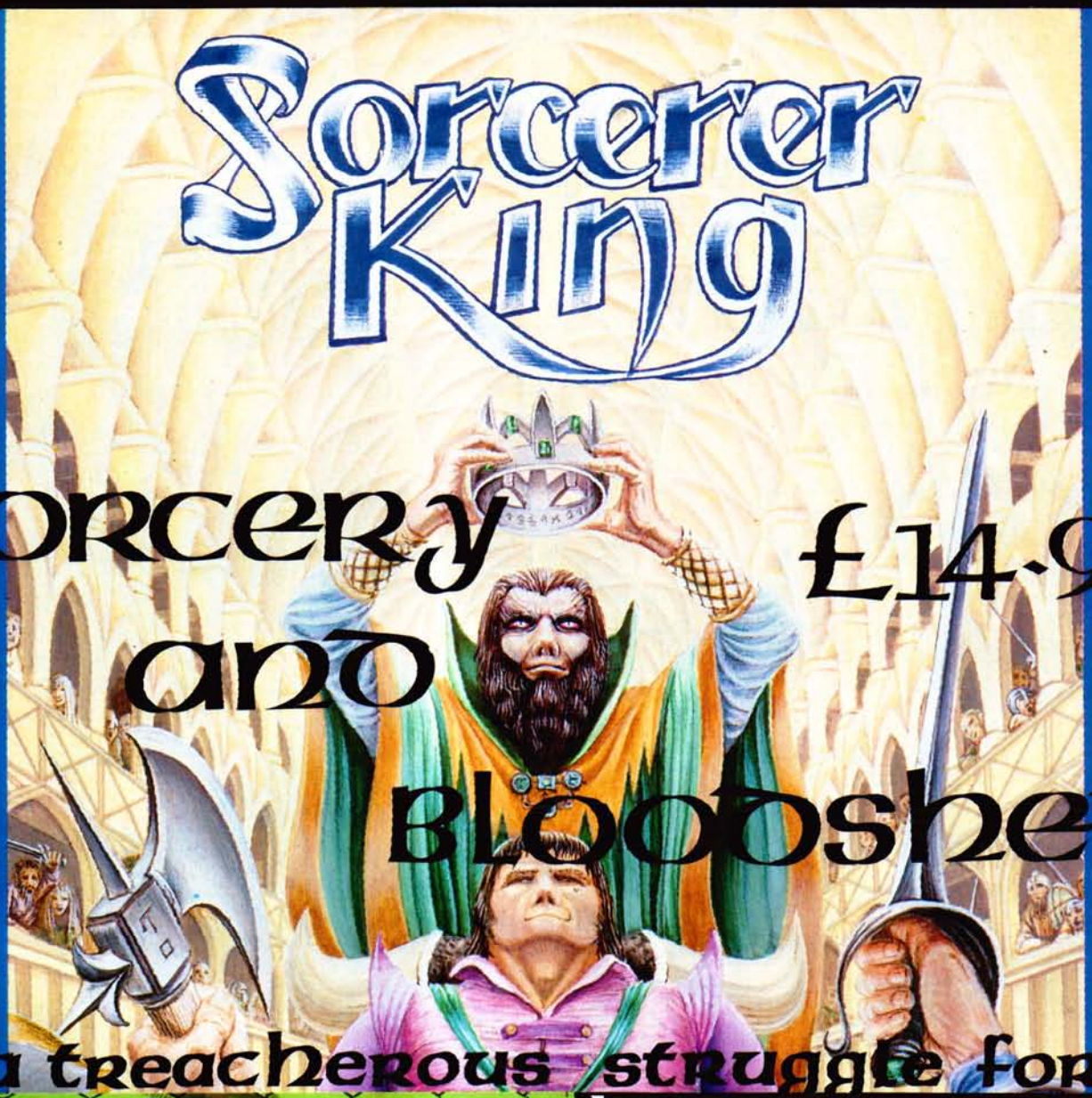

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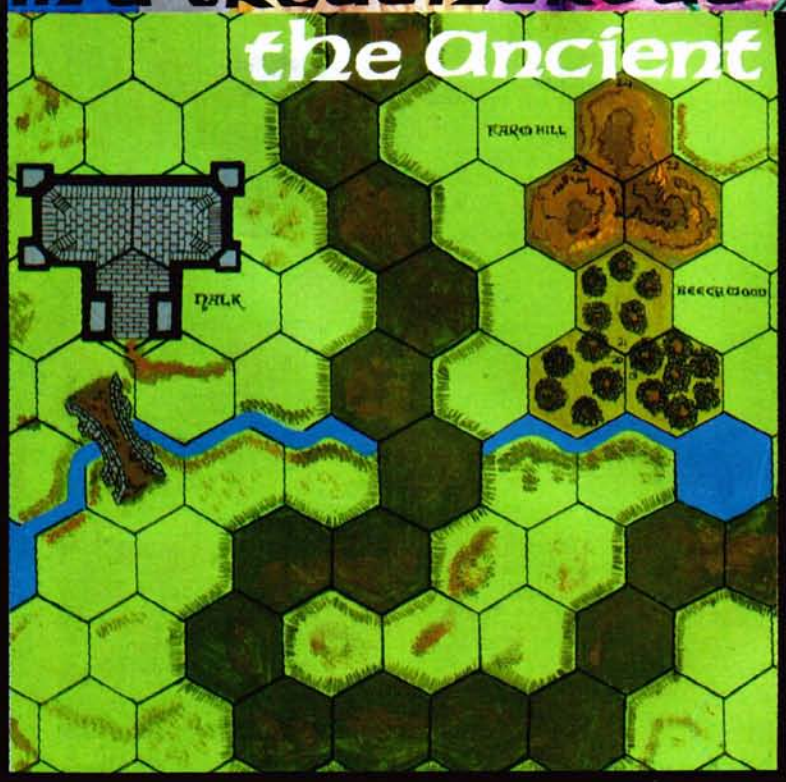

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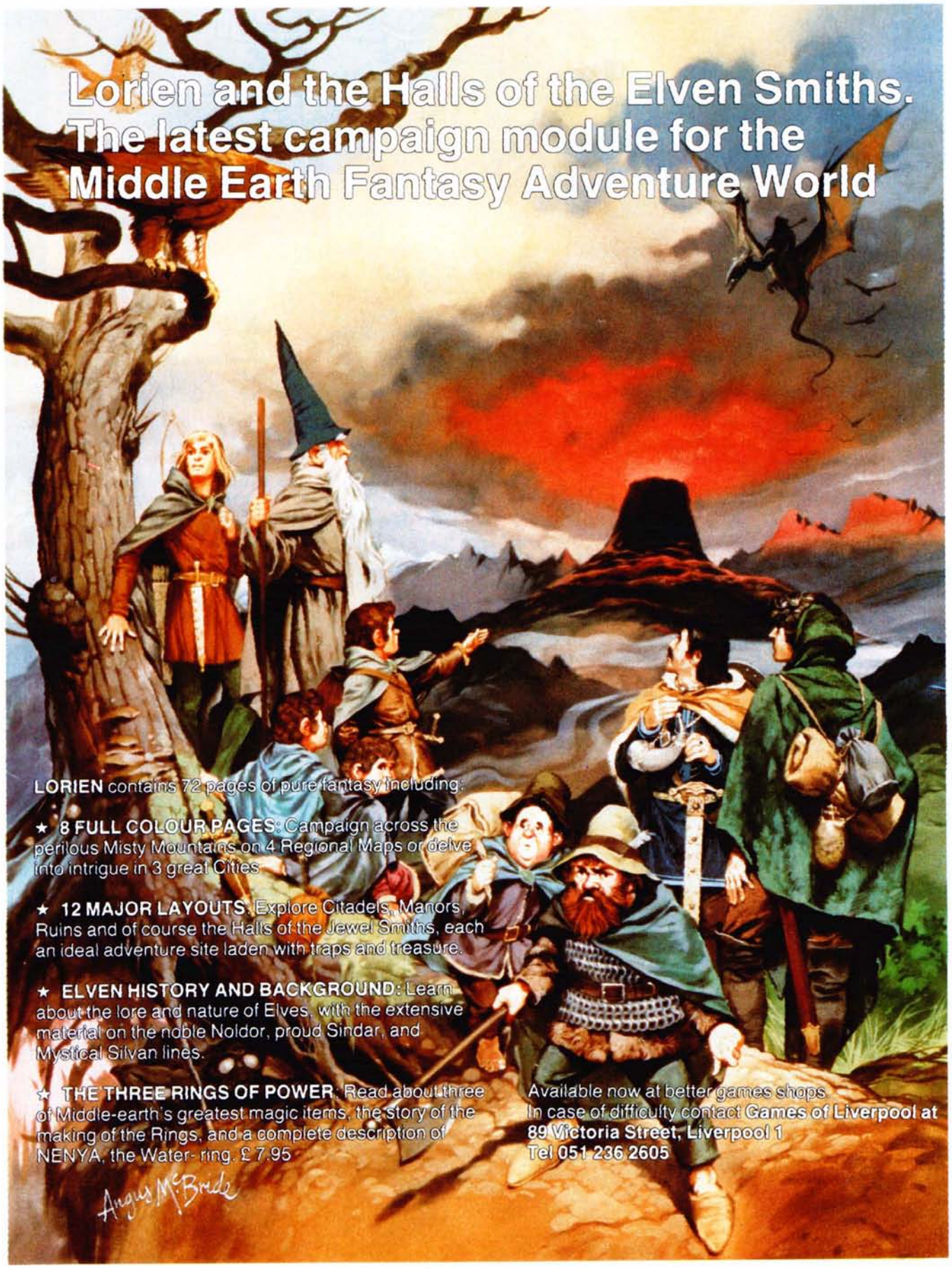
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FIGURES FRONT

By Martyn Tetlow & Mike Willis

FRONT LINE:

This issue takes on an oriental flavour as we introduce you to **Dixon Miniatures** of Huddersfield. To those of you who have been involved in table-top wargaming Dixons will probably be quite a familiar name already, but they also do a very useful line in role-playing characters.

Dixon Miniatures take their name from the owner, **Mr. Trevor A. Dixon** who, like so many of us became interested in model soldiers at an early age. He was only about eight years old when he picked up a pocket size book by Peter Blom (Oh Peter! Where are you now, and do you realise what you've been responsible for?). The figures in this little book, although possibly not too intricate by todays standards, made a definite impression on young Trevor and, as the expression goes, the die was cast.

Trevor Dixon left school in 1972, by which time Hinchcliffe Models were firmly established as one of the leading wargame figure manufacturers (role playing games were yet to be born of course). After hammering at their door several times, he was given a job finishing production models, etc. Trevor was working with a gentleman named **Don Longley** who, to quote Trevor directly "has probably forgotten more about mould making and casting than I know" which is quite a compliment! After a couple of years with Hinchcliffe he decided that it was time to 'strike out alone', so Dixon Miniatures was conceived. As with so many figure manufacturers, Trevor began in a very small way working in his bedroom and his father's cellar, and with his mother doing the typing and accounts. I think he will be the first to admit that success didn't come overnight. In fact, it took another two years and another two part time jobs before the business got underway properly.

The first Dixon Figures were relatively unusual types of Napoleonics in 54mm scale cast in cold cure rubber. It was later when he had aquired a casting machine and moulding press that Trevor decided to try and break into the larger wargames market. The first range were Mongols and then inspired by the prints of Roald Knutsen, a range of samurai.

Trevor became a full time manufacturer and moved the business to its present location at Spring Grove Mills in Linthwaite. Dixons now comprises of Trevor, his wife Christine who handles invoices, accounts and mail orders. Nick Walker handles the retail orders and Mark Thompson is in charge of the casting. Outside figure designers include "Rambo" Tim Hallam who creates 15mm Samurai, Mark Copplestone who created the legends of Nippon range, and Lloyd Price who did the new dwarfs.

Trevor still produces the moulds, does all the promotional work, a bit of casting and according to himself, generally goes mad- it's tough at the top! Expansion seems inevitable for Dixons but Trevor is determined not to lose track of quality control; his customers have come to expect fine quality castings and he is adamant that this is what they will receive.

I must admit that all the figures that we received were very cleanly cast with an almost total absence of flash, the detail is crisp and the figures a delight to paint. From the adventure gamers point of view, the most useful figures are in the **Legends of Nippon** range, a selection of heroic warriors and supernatural opponents straight from the pages of oriental mythology. The more standard wargames range compliments these figures with a large selection of foot and mounted oriental fighters.

The Samurai horses actually come with grass, stones etc. moulded onto their bases which is a nice touch.

The new range of dwarves cater to the more 'normal' fantasy market and the dark ages range of Scots, Irish, etc. provides some fine human characters.

BACK TO FRONT:

I recently received a letter from **Timothy Reed** of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne asking me what paint is used on the models we show in **Adventurer**. I personally use mostly **'Miniature Paints' which are acrylic and relatively kind to brushes, and also 'Armoury Paints'** (also acrylic). I favour acrylics because they can be thinned with water, and brushes need only be washed in water. I used to use only enamel paints with which I can achieve an identical result, but these seemed very harsh on my brushes even when cleaned with refined turpentine. I do still use some enamel paint to achieve certain metalic finishes. **Mike** uses similar paints to me but is also fond of coloured inks and sometimes gouache, which I'm sure he will explain in a future issue.

Novice artist; Cleveland: "Please. please, please explain dry-brushing."

Dry brushing is a method of emphasising the prominent features of a figure such as hair, armour and folds in cloth.

First paint the area to be highlighted with a base colour of your choice. Next, mix a lighter shade of the same colour making it fairly thick. Using an old brush, dip into this mix, then wipe off most of the pigment with a tissue. Gently draw this "dry" brush across the surface and the residue of paint will adhere to the raised areas only.

UP FRONT

Having prepared your figure to perfection (!) there are a couple of items to consider before you actually start painting- brushes and paint! An obvious statement perhaps, but you won't get far without them. A little thought at this stage will pay dividends later.

Brushes:

To achieve the best results, it is essential to obtain good quality brushes. You can't create a miniature masterpiece with a 3" brush and a paint roller! The best brushes to use are sable water colour brushes. I would recommend that you buy them from an art shop, where there is usually a selection of better quality brushes. Unfortunately, sable brushes are a little expensive, but if cared for, will last much longer and give better results than any other type. If you really can't afford them, synthetic brushes will do.

Various brush sizes are available, ranging from the smallest at size 00000 to the larger ones at size 2 and 3; larger brushes than this are not really suitable for 25mm figures.

Choose sizes which you think you will be comfortable with. Experience should help you discover which ones best suit your style and requirements. As a general guide, sizes 1 and 2 are suitable for painting larger areas, applying washes and dry brushing, while size 0 and smaller are best used for fine detail such as facial features, belts and buckles, etc.

When selecting a brush, it is important to pick one that comes to a fine neat point, since this

allows greater control and accuracy. To maintain your brushes in this condition, ensuring a longer brush life, there are a number of points to follow:

1. When you have finished using a particular brush during a painting session, clean it THOROUGHLY in the appropriate thinner and then reform the point.
2. DO NOT leave a brush standing in the jar of thinners, as this will bend the point like a banana, rendering it suitable only for painting around corners.
3. It is a good idea to have two jars of thinners for each type of paint -one for cleaning brushes and another for thinning your paints with.
4. At the end of a session, clean all your brushes carefully using soap and warm water. Rinse and dry them, reforming the point as you do so.
5. Store your brushes carefully so that the points do not become damaged. Many brands are now sold with a plastic cover that can be placed over the bristles to protect them. If not, a plastic drinking straw will serve the same purpose.

DIXON MINIATURES

AN Elf with spear [**EV2**] being blocked by a punching monk [**UM1**].
Painted by **Mike Willis**

BG3 Goblin wielding Katana.
Painted by **Mike Willis**

D.O.2 Dai-Oni wielding No-Dachi.
Painted by **Mike Willis**

DW1 Dwarf with 2 handed axe.
Painted by **Martyn Tetlow**

SW2 Woman drawing Katana Vs **RO3** Ronin on guard.
Painted by **Martyn Tetlow**

O.2 Oni with mallet.
Painted by **Martyn Tetlow**

★ CAUTION! Metal miniatures contain lead and may be harmful if swallowed.

FANZINES FOREVER...?

BY BEN GOODALE & ALEX BARDY

STOP!!! Don't turn over the page. this is interesting. Honest! would we lie? What do you mean 'yes' ? Huh!

Apart from normal reviews of new zines, we'll also be covering a theme each issue, the first of which is detailed below. After covering the theme we'll be looking at some of the particularly good zines to have appeared over the last couple of months . Read on and enJoy....

We kick off the collumn with a small piece of news: A certain Space Chicken assaulted one of us (Alex!) at the **London Dragonmeet** and threatened GBH if we Didn't say that **Wolvesbane** is still around! He also said something about GBH to a certain Jeremy Nuttall if he continues to spread rumours about it's downfall...

We'll move swiftly onto new zines now: **Sacrificing the Goat** is another zine from the Cheshire Mafia. It's a pretty standard RPG zine with nothing radical, save a pretty good **Judge Dredd** scenario. Two zines with horror leanings are **Descending Darkness** and **Tales After Dark**, the latter being a superbly crafted fiction zine containing three tales of the Cthulhu Mythos. At two quid it's horrificly expensive but it must be said, it's worth every penny, especially for **CoC** players. Descending Darkness doesn't boast quite the same standards of production but does contain stuff which will prove of interest to players of horror RPG's. **Harvest Time** is a good first issue; neat in both layout and printing. Articles cover various topics, ranging from NPC's through background, to fiction. All in all, a nice beginning. **Thunderwind** is also on issue 1 but isn't really new since it started on 0. It's very big, presenting lots of campaign material, scenario's and reviews. The Editor's attitude however is rather unpleasant, and leaves you with a feeling of 'So What?'.

The best first issue we've seen for quite a while is **Moronica Ripsnore**, yet another Scottish zine. Within it's pink cover there is a very good piece of fiction, namely '**Tales of Thadius Leaf**' [a 7- page saga of a master thief].'**A poor Man's Guide to Live Action Roleplaying**' is also good and fits in with our humour theme.

Apart from this, there's chat, music, the mean arena PBM, a Cthulhu scenario, and a couple of discursive RPG articles. The editor claims that his inspiration came from **Tome Of Horrors** and **Utter Drivel** [what taste!], so if you've seen them you'll have a good idea what to expect in MR. Well worth 60p.

Now onto the zine reviews proper, and a look at a controversial subJect, namely humour....

We start with **Green Goblin** #5, the kind of zine to get if you like bad-taste humour, silly stories, and lots of swear words! This particular issue contains no less than three silly stories, all of a fair size, and though readable, not particularly funny . There's relief in the form of the warhammer scenario, in which you too can meet Princess Yeughh, Hangrim Mono, Chewing Bacoy, Darth Botha, and the dreaded...General Accident. The rest of the zine is fairly standard, with such things as firearms in AD & D, and a 13 page lettercol!! OKay for a light read but...

Once more **Tome Of Horrors** rears it's slimy head, this time £4. This issue sees a vast improvement over the previous three, with presentation reaching new peaks. Lord of The Doorknockers continues, along with a hilarious convention report [of Albacon] where the participants competed for 'Asshole Points' ! Some competition results povide yet more mirth, along with the Greenham Common RPG. Add chat, reviews, letters, and a couple of RPG articles and you get a very readable zine.

Next on the list is **Sound & Fury** #3, a well-

produced zine if ever there was one.

In this issue there's a short scenario for Bunnies & Burrows in which your rabbits have been experimented on. The result? - They all Possess some kind of super-rabbit ability and go gallivanting about causing havoc! There's also a piece on cheating in RPG's, and a lengthy article on **Cutey Bunny** for **Golden Heroes** which is actually unreadable in one part due to a foulup by the editor. Also continued is **Judge Fredd**, a rather badly drawn Judge Dredd spoof.

Imazine #4 leaps into action with various anti-Games Workshop Jokes following the editor's departure from a certain other gaming magazine. There's '**Open Box**', where games 'are reviewed by independant reviewers who work for us'. Thrud makes an appearance too, with 'Thrud gets a Social Disease'. As well as this there's lots to read, with articles on gaming styles, music in RPG's, and various other subjects. Well worth a read this...

Moving on to the 'Highlights' of the last month or so, we have these little gems...

Die Rubezahl #1 is probably the best produced and illustrated fanzine ever. Its 44 'A4' pages, which translated to the more standard A5 format would mean almost a 90 page beast! There are serious articles on Shape Shifters, Magic, and a lengthy piece of horror fiction tied to a Cthulhu scenario outline. Also present is a large letter column with comments on the previous incarnation of the zine (Monsterous Perversion), and a fairly derogatory news and zine reviews. Tying in with our humour theme, there's a piece by 'Jon Breakforth', the almost-editor of 'Bogroll Bladder', the zine which never quite made it! A good read, and is worth the £1.30 price Just to see the excellent presentation.

Out of The Mist #2 has finally arrived, and we're told it'll be the last. This issue contains more stuff on what was originally intended to be the backbone of the zine, their Seaguard campaign, as well as yet another plea to potential zine editors to contribute to other zines first. The rest of the zine is taken up with plenty of fiction, a fairly short Judge Dredd scenario, a scrappy cartoon strip, and probably the best article ever written about NPC's. A very nice zine, though the attitude in places is a bit ... erm... questionable...

Stop Press News:

Telegraph Road £18 is now out. A very good zine this, dedicating itself to designing the Ultimate RPG!

As a special offer to **Adventurer** readers, we have put together a zine pack consisting of what we consider to be the the five top, general fanzines: **Telegraph Road- Demons Drawl- Utter Drivel** (yes! it is edited by Ben!!!) – **Sound & Fury** – **Starquester** – and **Imazine**. This costs a mere £2.60, and should prevent you being put off by some of the nastier zines around at the mo. The price includes postage (such generosity!). Don't miss out. Send a cheque or Postal Order for £2.50, made payable to Ben Goodale, to Ben at the relevant address.

Relevant Addresses:

Alex Bardy, 28b Gladsmuir Road, Archway, London, N19 3JX
(Editor of **EH?**,#6 now out @ 50p PBM/Chat)

Ben Goodale, Cairnmore, Crianlarich, Perthshire, FK20 8QS
(Editor of **Utter Drivel**, #4 now out @ 60p- FRP/ Chat)

Sacrificing The Goat: Mark Jones, 16 Orchard Green, Alderley Edge, Cheshire, SK9 7DT (30p, 35 A5pp)

Descending Darkness: Steve Scott, 7 Lincoln Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 6TJ (50p, 36 A5pp)

Tales After Dark: Garrie Hall, 93 Beaumont Road, Loughbrough, Leicestershire, LE11 2JA
(£2, 48 A5pp)

Harvest Time: Martin Veart, 10 Cedar Drive, Oulton Broad, Lowerstoft, Suffolk, NR33 9H (60p, 28 A5pp)

Thunderwind: John Dalziel, 27 Forvie Terrace, Bridge of Don, Aberdeen, AB2 8TH (75p, 80 A5pp)

Moronica Ripsnore: Gordon McLennan, 36 Solway Place, Muirhead, Troon, KA10 7EJ (60p, 40 A5pp)

Green Goblin: John Breakwell, 17c Uplands Crescent, Swansea, SA2 ONX (60p, 56 A5pp)

Tome Of Horrors: Gordon Moir, 115 Vardar Avenue, Clarkston, Glasgow, G76 7RR(60p, 40 A5pp)

Sound & Fury: James Wallis, The Manor House, Little Bealings, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP13 6LL
(60p, 44 A5pp)

Imazine: Paul Mason, 11 Waller Road, New Cross, London, SE14 5LE (75p, 20 A4pp)

Die Rubezahl: Pete Blanchard, 4 Holly Acre, Prey Heath, Mayford, Woking, Surrey, GU22 OSL
(£1.30, 44 A4pp)

Out of the Mist . . . Jason Kingsley, 72 Main Street, Osgathorpe,Leicestershire, LE12 9TA
(85p, 80 A5pp)

Telegraph Road: Jeremy Nuttall, 49 Longdown Road, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 4QH, (60p, 40 A5pp)

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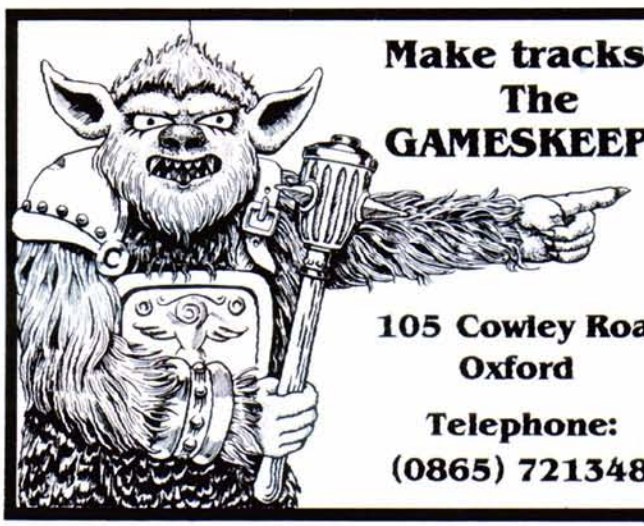

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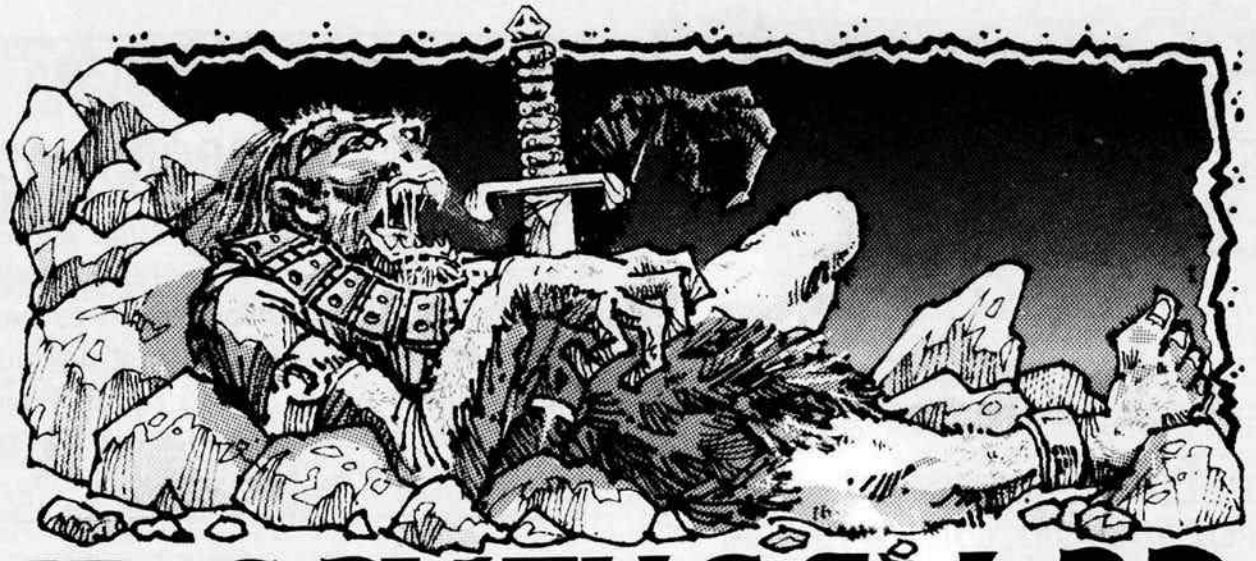

LIVE-BY-THE-SWORD

READERS' LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TRISTAN KNOTT. In reply to Rich Mumford (Adventurer #2), why is supporting one games system 'purile'? No-one castigates Dagon for only printing Call of Cthulhu stuff: I know its all the rage to deny ever having looked at D&D, but it happens to be my preferred system; as someone has said elsewhere: If you play 20 different games systems, you can't have many extended campaigns, resulting in little or no characterization.

GRAHAM STAPLEHURST: Congratulations on Adventurer #2. If your next issue is going to be even bigger, I can see that you may well be challenging WD soon as the top British role-gaming magazine. Keep up the good work!

A change in your tune from last issue, Graham. Obviously, issue 2 made a good impression with you. (Either that, or you realised you mis-counted the number of advertisements from certain of our advertisers.) Lets hope £3 lives up to your expectations!

JOHN DALZIEL: re: **"Fire On High"** – Excellent! This is what magik should be; strange, unpredictable and mysterious. Magik is perfect for creating atmosphere and that elusive feeling of impending doom. Something like this is much more rewarding than "Cannonball magik".

You're not the only fan of Rob Nott's, John, as the next letter shows...

CHRIS KIRK: Great stuff! At last an article relating magic in RPGs to magic in the real world. I've been waiting for a games-player with more literary skill than I to do this for years! As the basis of a series of articles or a thought-provoking article or the start of a 'new' magic system, it is a very welcome and well written/explained piece. Look forward to the rest.

CLINT REDWOOD: After reading "Fire On High", I have concluded that it is strictly true except for a few points. The astrological influences are rubbish (??-ed.) This moves into the ridiculous. secondly, there is another stage. After the magic link is made, the mage must seek power to power the magic. This is done by making another connection to the deity, demon or devil. The mage must make sure that the magic is ethical. For instance, had Perion's patron deity been lawful good, he would not "plug-in" Perion to the power, on the grounds that making someone love you is using more- than- reasonable force. **(Oh, you mean in AD&D, don't you? -ed.)** Further than that, a devil, demon or evil deity might take the perverse pleasure of making the magic go wrong.

JERRY TAYLOR: "Fire on High" was just the sort of article that intelligent gamers have been crying out for, rather than a tea-chest of more spells that we see elsewhere..I'm afraid that articles on designing your own rules systems don't go down too well with the games manufacturers, though, as it might stop people buying "Advanced Dragonewts" or whatever they are trying to flog next!

A synical opinion of certain aspects of the gaming world there, Jerry. Systemless scenarios opened up a whole can of worms, but some of the more constructive comments arrived as follows...

CHRIS KIRK: Personally, I hardly ever use magazine/official scenarios in gaming sessions because of the difficulty posed by players' access to the sources. Also, there is the matter of my own, virtually systemless, ad-lib style of refereeing. I do read scenarios for ideas and entertainment, though, whatever the setting or system. Anyone not willing to fit a systemless scenario into their campaign either has very little time, or doesn't have the commitment the game needs.

A systemless referee, eh...how about a systemless SYSTEM? Now THAT would be innovative!

SIMON LETTS: I am all in favour of systemless scenarios for two reasons: 1) FLEXIBILITY- where no stats are given, the GM can fit the scenario to the party, to ensure a close and enjoyable game, and 2) They enable more 'ideas' to be included, which is primarily what a GM is looking for in predesigned material.

ANN BROOMFIELD: I am all for real systemless scenarios, but this does not mean just omitting NPC statistics. From my experience as a Runequest GM, reading AD&D scenarios, I suggest the following guidelines:
1) The scenario should not rely too heavily on a monster/society type of magic that may not be translatable. Some D&D scenarios are a bit gross in the magic 'n' monsters department compared to more subtle, human-orientated games like RQ, C&S and Bushido.
2) Leave in the stats by all means, but add brief descriptions. A few words on

an NPC's personality and how his/her skills compare with an average adventurer, or an explanation of a monster's appearance and powers makes all the difference. An elf or dwarf is familiar to everyone, but who would instantly guess that an AD&D gorgon is not one of Medusa's sisters, but a bronze-scaled bull? With a brief description, a good GM can adopt the given stats or substitute an appropriate monster.

NIGEL BOULTON: I am against systemless scenarios, as they usually take the form of a loose short story. I can get ideas from short stories anywhere. To me, a published scenario should do away with all the work by including as much detail as possible within the space permitted. Please, by all means, cover the less popular games, but do have at least one established fantasy-type scenario per issue. After all, how many orcs do you know who ride low monsters, or call up eldritch abominations?

To quickly move away from the subject, we had some contrasting feedback from the content of last issue:

PHIL MASTERS: "This Empress Earth" was annoying. Simplistic, cliche-ridden, derivative- and thats just the title!! It wasn't the worst thing ever published in a games magazine-there might even be ideas worth borrowing in it, but it is the sort of thing that gives superhero games a silly name.

MATHEW JONES: As a Rolemaster GM, I did like the Rolemaster scenario (one of the first in the UK!), and would like to see more like it. The map has become half of a new country I have designed for my latest campaign. The NPCs are filed into my collection for future use, and I have instructed my players not to buy the first two issues of your magazine (Thanks- ed.) so I can try it out on them. All in all, this scenario has been good value. What I don't want to see are systemless scenarios; I would like to see aids for writing a scenario for my system, for my specific campaign! Two ideas come to mind:
1) Colour, unlabelled maps on the centre pages, rather than free posters. A well-painted map of a landscape, with no cities marked on it, and no names whatsoever, upon which I could scrawl names relating to my own campaign. I can't continue to tape your maps onto the side of areas of my world forever!
2) Detailed, scenario-less NPCs. You could feature one character a month (perhaps more), give a detailed description of his appearance, history and personality and his quirks. For example, a guard who can't be bribed with gold, beer or women, but is partial to a nice bit of sausauge. His stats. could then be supplied for various systems. In this way, GMs can build up a library of NPCs, each with a story to tell, and each one adding colour to the campaign world.

Plenty of food for thought there, Mathew. I'll see what I can come up with.

PETER AND JANET VIALLS: Firstly, we still think Black Tower is lousy (any scenario that says nothing about motives and personality of NPCs is not worth printing). Secondly, Empress Earth is straightforward, fun, and quite acceptable: we have no complaints. Fire on High is excellent: more ,more ,more. and that is all the true 'gaming' content in Adv £2. On the other hand, don't drop the reviews, letters, gossip, figures, fanzine coverage etc: all this is welcome.

PAUL McCONNELL: Ultimately, the best part of your magazine is its attempt to give the reader what he wants, and not telling us 'all we need to know'. For instance, your shop window pages are 'just right'. Keep up the good work, introduce colour pages to the inside- oh, you do have! Ahem-sorry, it seems I have no complaints at all.

CHRIS STIMSON: Congratulations to you and your team, but I felt provoked to write to you in the hope that you might do something about the lack of coverage of S/F rpgs (?4!) in magazines. I don't want to knock what is a very good magazine, but a few spaceships instead of hobbits, please!

To answer that, Chris, I can only say that ADVENTURER relies solely on articles and scenarios contributed by people like yourself, and, unfortunately, we have received no suitable S/F material so far. I hope that the introduction of Wendy Graham's column this issue might go some way to make up for the lack of sci-fi to date.

RICHARD BARTUAL: Well you can't please everybody, but issues one and two of **ADVENTURER** had a damn good try! The articles on method role-playing and psychology have endeared you to those of us who favour the less well-known RPGs, and who consequently find much of the mechanics -orientated material virtually useless.
Role-playing is enjoyed by a variety of people these days, mainly due to the emergence of games of the book/ film/ TV series, etc.; those who demand that you cover D&D to the exclusion of all else are, I'm afraid, living in the past.

I thought this was another letter about systemless scenarios, and I think it will be the last viewpoint aired in this issue on that subject. For next issue, I would like your feedback on the moral implications of role-playing games, and the satanic/ devil-worship connotations such games conjure up in the minds of the 'moral majority'. Till our next Adventure together, Ste Dillon signing off.

An address to the Publishers of A Religious Tract, Dark Dungeons:

I recently received on my desk an "anti D&D" religious tract; the following answer was sent to the distributors of the tract:

A. Those people who play D&D who are well-adjusted, normal citizens of this globe, are totally unaffected by the nefarious occult references within the game. The occult in Fantasy is not the same as the occult of Satan. It usually revolves around 'good magic', miracles if you like, performed for the benefit of humankind and it's allies, AGAINST monsters of Satan; Dragons, Demons, Evil mages and the like.

B. Those people who ARE interested in the real occult, can through games-playing and abstracting their ideas to pencil and paper, have a catharctic effect on these desires. That is to say, they can "play it out of their system".

C. Born-again Christians Do play role-playing games. For many, it is enjoyment, a chance to socialise and to bring their ideals and beliefs into the light by abstracting it through their player-characters on paper. Hence, even shy Christians are less willing to 'hide their light under a bushel'. If tracts such as these become accepted on face value, Christians *will* turn away from D&D, and will be rejected by their former playing partners. NO joy or salvation for the remaining players there . . .

D. Examples of suicide, hysteria and total dedication to 'the game', as indicated in the tract, are very, very few. These are problems of personality, societal problems that occur through all walks of life. Sport has claimed many such victims, religion has, so has just about anything in which the spiritually retarded or socially rejected individual can hide away, secure in his false environment. Rather than slandering the said environment, eg. the games club, it is the spiritual obligation of Christianity to infiltrate these areas and to BRING THEIR FAITH TO GAMES PLAYERS.

To summarise, Role-playing games are not intrinsically evil, nor are they a tool of Satan any more than any other walk of modern life. The people who play these games are not evil people, nor do they necessarily have any interest in the occult. To them, it is just a game. In reality, it is just a game. What we should be concerned with is the *motivation* for playing games, and the pleasure derived from it. For Christians (who really should know better) to judge all games players in this way is an example of extreme bigotry. For the publishers of the tract to act without consultation or without true insight into the games world, was foolhardy and ill-advised. To pursue this matter further would, I fear, be ridiculous. Christianity has to live in the modern world, not the Puritanical, self-righteous world of yesteryear. It has to justify whatever the Christian beliefs are, and not to publish tracts which exclaim "This is so because it is so, because we say it is so!". This attitude is a self-righteous, bigoted approach that will earn Christianity no more than muffled laughter and sidelong glances.

Stephen Dillon
Editor: ADVENTURER magazine.

FIRE ON HIGH

by Rob Nott

Part Two: Making The Magic System Work

Special material components For Certain Spells:

A potion of youth may require some rare Golden Apples guarded by a 9-headed hydra on some god-forsaken island. The crushed bone powder of a Troll skeleton may be wanted for an amulet to ward off Dark Shades. To get to the point, magic needs materials to make it work. The beauty of the system I present you with is that the GM does not have to decide in advance the millions of different "special ingredients" for the infinite number of spell combinations as the players do not know them in advance. In other words, when they want to cast some sort of spell, THEY SHOULD RESEARCH IT! The GM can then provide them with some information relating to that area of spell study, noting it as precedent in his own work book or loose leaf file. As time goes by his notebook will fill up with spell examples - providing him with a very rich magical background without spending months of writing it out in advance. Ideal, eh? If the player does not bother to research his desired effects then he has only himself to blame if the spell does not work out as he expects...

This sort of system adds a lot of colour to the game since the player's research will depend on their facilities. Mages will therefore eagerly grab at any source of occult knowledge (old grimoires, scrolls, talismans covered in runic language, sheafs of pages made from human skin and written in blood etc) since the more volumes they can accumulate, the faster, the more succesful and the better quality their research will be. Needless to say a **Quality result system** applies also to research rolls, modified by various factors such as facilities and existing subject knowledge. Volumes can also deal with specific subjects rather than being all inclusive. For example, **"Imric's Book of Ebon Bindings"** might deal with ritualistic astral projection and contain rather important information such as "if you leave your host body without surrounding it with sanctified runes of protection it is likely to be possessed by a Legion of demons"... any Mage not bothering to research his spell of astral projection may well find himself homeless and cursing the GM who will simply grin in a particularly evil way...

Side effects of sorcery

A favourite of mine is what I call 'The Entropy Effect'. This theory suggests that Mana is no different to any other form of energy (coal, oil, petrol etc) in that it undergoes a conversion process: Most of the Mana is "burnt up" in creating the magical effect, but there is a side effect residue created called 'Entropy', and, like most side effects, it is harmful. Entropy cannot be seen or felt anymore than Mana can, but it is there nonetheless. The best way of describing it is to say it's an acid that eats away at reality. If reality is considered as a complex web-like structure of fibers holding back random chaos, Entropy collects on the fibers and eats them away! Reality can cope with a certain level of Entropy, as it can regenerate at a steady rate. However, if too much Entropy appears (through constant spell casting in a short period of time in roughly the same area), it can eat through the fibers faster than they can regenerate with the result that several of the strands will snap. Reality in that area will go to pot. Effects vary on the seriousness of the damage and can range from a rainfall of frogs to a situation reminiscent of the final chapters of **Moorcock's** novel **'Stormbringer.'** Added to which, the central point of the effect will be the spell caster himself. He will be most seriously affected. This idea may not be to everyones taste, but it is a useful way of discouraging heavy handed use of magik; the consequences can be dire.

Other side effects include ageing through the use of magik (with an antidote being the good ol' **Apples of Youth** guarded by that nine headed hydra and a few hundred Mortiferous Visps on a pseudo-Sinbad island...), loss of life force for serious spells, loss of piety for Black Magik, loss of blood for a magik system similar to book 4 of **Donaldson's Thomas Covenant** novels (in which magik has to be accompanied by blood in order for it to work) and many other limiting factors. I cannot stress too strongly how very important it is to build into your magik system logical limiting factors for your sorcerers - magik can be very powerful and can easily dominate the game if you are not careful.

Demons

Hand in hand with magik is the concept of a Miltonesque Hell populated by a Legion of Exorcist rejects. Stereotyped, yes, but also very atmospheric if handled correctly. This genre is a particular favourite of mine, so the article would be lacking if I didn't devote some space to the subject. The most obvious involvement to the campaign is the old chestnut of **Demon Summoning.** The first question one must ask is why would anyone summon one?

The answer of course is that they are very powerful and if handled correctly can be incredibly useful... the problem of course lies in handling them correctly... Several very good short stories have been written on the subject of pacts with Hell, and most of them portray demons as cunning bastards who trick their poor summoners, or in some cases have the upper hand from the word go (see "Convergent Series" by Larry Niven for a fine example of such).

The most important thing is that players should start off totally in the dark as regards Demon Summoning. By all means scare them with rumours of NPC sorcerers never being heard from again after evoking **Belial** or whoever, and emphasise how Arch-Wizard **Phandaal** was found at the bottom of his stair-way with his head twisted round 180 degrees, but **don't** tell them how to summon anything... have them piece their information together bit by precious bit. Let them study their grimoires for listings of demons. Let them journey on foot to the Mountains of Tibet to speak with some ancient mystic to learn a few pentangles of protection. Have them trek to the Court of the Crimson King where they must entertain his fire elemental courtiers in exchange for a few basic evocation rituals. Players are of course quite welcome to experiment with their own improvised rituals, but doing so is much akin to playing in the dark with a loaded gun. Details of what the demons are like can be found in rotting parchment volumes deep in locked library vaults. Information on typical pacts with Hell can be learnt from those lucky few who survived to tell the tale.

For play's sake, don't adopt the 'Stormbringer'/'Chivalry and Sorcery' idea of giving the players detailed lists of all the different stages of Summonings complete with percentage chance side effects (and how to avoid them) and hit point values... if you are going to have a good occult flavour to the campaign you want to cultivate a gothic feel, and that springs from the unknown. You can't have the 'unknown' if your players all possess the same game rules as you do! This is why games such as Call of Cthulhu are invariably lacking in the suspense of the unknown because all the players are familiar with the exact text book attributes of a Shoggoth and the precise chance of summoning it. I am afraid that is the problem in using a commercial set of rules in it's purest form - everyone else has access to it! This is why I put so much value on a home grown system - as only the GM knows how everything actually works (or doesn't as the case may be...)

And then we come to the demons themselves. By the time one is actually summoned there should be a certain amount of trepidation as to what it will be like. Do not, at this point, spoil everything by having it sould like Vincent Price in some 1960s 'B' movie horror film. Demons should either be incredibly suave and misleading (ideally with the voice of Anthony Valentine, but few people can

reproduce it) or totally wild as in the Exorcist (possibly the finest cinematic portrayal of a demon ever). Avoid lines such as "Foolish mortal, now I shall make you pay" or "I have come to claim you soul... ha ha ha ha ha! (evil laughter)." As a general rule of thumb, if it sounds like it would fit in a Hammer Horror film then leave it out...

Players should never feel that they know exactly what they are doing - for when they do, all suspense is lost from the game.

An old favourite, once you have the demon trapped inside your pentagram surrounded by the names of Holy Angels (you mean you didn't inscribe angellic names on your pentagram? Oh dear...) is to bind the beastie to your service (rather than make some doubtful pact with it). Some games depict this as a simple Power vs Power roll - easy, but extremely dull and lacking in colour. If one wishes to bind a demon one should use something a bit more involved; for a start you will need some form of significant foci to bind it to, and a Mage cannot simply use any old thing. This is where the Correspondencies come into play once again: if your demon is under the influence of Capricorn (to discover this will of course take some research) then naturally it makes sense to bind him to a material item representing the opposite star sign (so as to weaken the beast and keep him imprisoned). An opposite star sign is six places on from your original, so the opposite of Capricorn would be Cancer. To actually command the Beast one would use a Capricorn ritual (law of Connectivity and Law of Knowledge). An old favourite is a corresponding gem stone with which to bind the demon, but anything will do so long as it is not too silly. A sensible Mage will also do a bit of theological research before binding his demons as most religions include lasting transcripts of rituals to imprison/banish/weaken the creatures complete with Holy words of power that serve the same function. The weaker the demon can be made, the easier it will be to bind him. Finally, just in case things do go horrendously wrong, a wise Mage will be loaded down with as many charms of protection as he can possibly carry. Then all that is left is to cast the spell of binding which is treated as stage two of the normal process (no link needs to be made as one already exists from when the sorcerer summoned the demon in the first place). The demon gets to resist and of course if he succeeds he may choose to assault the pentagram holding him prisoner... so it had better be strong! And even if the creature is bound, only the GM knows under what conditions it may be able to break free...

Talismanic Magik

Throughout history sorcerers have made enchanted items of for protection, curses, healing and anything else they might need at the time. Since this adds colour to a magik system, it should be encouraged by the GM. The encouragement is pretty obvious: a well made talisman tends to have a greater effect than an impromtu spell, and of course it is ready for immediate use without sacrificing 29 goats and invoking the Sun God Ra in a half hour long ceremony, something there may not be much time for...

It is suggested that if a player wished to create his own charms/talismans he should design them as if he were doing it for real. A good campaign should therefore have a couple of magical alphabets, a runic tongue and a set of hieroglyphics to represent certain images and ideas (i.e. a symbol of peace, a symbol of love, a symbol for death etc, etc) all of which can be incorporated into Talisman design specific to each individual Mage. "For your magical alphabet," use the runes of Tolkien or develop your own arcane-looking symbols. It is important that the talisman design is based round what the Mage wishes it to function as. Inscribing runes of war on an amulet to protect against lycanthropes is not a shining example of good design... The table of correspondencies will suggest what the charm should be made of, what colour it is and what time it should be enchanted.

At which point, dear reader, this article rounds to a close. Some examples of useful tables follow to give you an idea of what is needed reference wise. The aim of this article has been discursive in nature - it is beyond the scope of a magazine piece to present a fully detailed magik system applicable to every FRP game - that would fill an entire book. Hopefully though it will have sparked off some ideas of your own and prompt you to play around with game design yourself. Commercial rules are not holy scriptures to be left in their purest form - rules are not - there is always room for improvement, no matter how good the original product.

TABLE OF CORRESPONDENCIES:

SIGN	PLANET	METAL	GEM	COLOUR	PLANT	NUMBER
Aries	Mars	Iron	Ruby, Red Jasper	Scarlet	Geranium Sage	One
Taurus	Venus	Copper	Topaz, Emerald	Orange	Mallow, Clover	Six
Gemini	Mercury	Quick-silver	Alexandrite, Onyx	Orange	Orchid, Gladiolus	Eleven
Cancer	Moon	Silver	Emerald Turquoise	Amber	Lotus, Comfrey	Eight
Leo	Sun	Gold	Opal, Zirkon	Greenish Yellow	Sunflower Cyclamen	Twelve
Virgo	Mercury	Quick-silver	Diamond, Chrysolite	Green	Snowdrop, Narcissus	Seven
Libra	Venus	Copper	Chrysolite/ Jade	Emerald	Aloe	Two
Scorpio	Mars	Iron	Carnelian Malachite	Sea Blue	Cactus, Houndtongue	Five
Sagittarius	Jupiter	Tin	Carbuncle Sapphire	Blue	Rush, Pimpernel	Three
Capricorn	Saturn	Lead	Black Opal Tourmaline	Indigo	Thistle, Sorrel	Nine
Aquarius	Uranus	Lead	Aquamarine Lapis Lazuli	Violet	Absinth, Fennel	Four
Pisces	Neptune	Tin	Pearl, Amethyst	Crimson	Opium, Birthwort	Ten

SIGN	ELEMENT	CREATURE	BODY PART	SPHERES OF INTEREST
Aries	Fire	Ram/Owl	Head	Strength and Combat
Taurus	Earth	Bull	Neck	Endurance, Health and Curing
Gemini	Air	Magpie	Hands/Lungs	Communication/Knowledge
Cancer	Water	Crab	Breast/Stomach	Rational thought/Madness/Fortune
Leo	Fire	Lion	Heart/Spine	Leadership/Power/Justice
Virgo	Earth	Virgin	Abdomen	Love/Sex/Language
Libra	Air	Elephant	Lower back	Commerce/Co-operation/Peace
Scorpio	Water	Scorpion	Pelvis	Evil deeds/Scheming/Vengeance
Sagittarius	Fire	Centaur	Thighs	Defence/Resurrection/Teaching
Capricorn	Earth	Goat	Knees	Death/Failure/Destruction/Age
Aquarius	Air	Eagle/Man	Ankles	Magic/Treasure/Friendship
Pisces	Water	Fish	Feet	Travel/Religion/Treachery

PLANETARY HOURS:

HOUR	SUNSDAY	MOONSDAY	MARSDAY
1st	Sun	Moon	Mars
2nd	Venus	Saturn	Sun
3rd	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus
4th	Moon	Mars	Mercury
5th	Saturn	Sun	Moon
6th	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn
7th	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter
MERCURYDAY	**JUPITERDAY**	**VENUS**	**SATURN**
Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn
Moon	Mars	Merc	Jupiter
Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars
Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun
Mars	Mercury	Jupit	Venus
Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury
Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon

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139 Demons
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141 Clerics
142 Hippogriff
143 Captives
144 Barbarians
145 Ogres
146 Skeleton Command Pack
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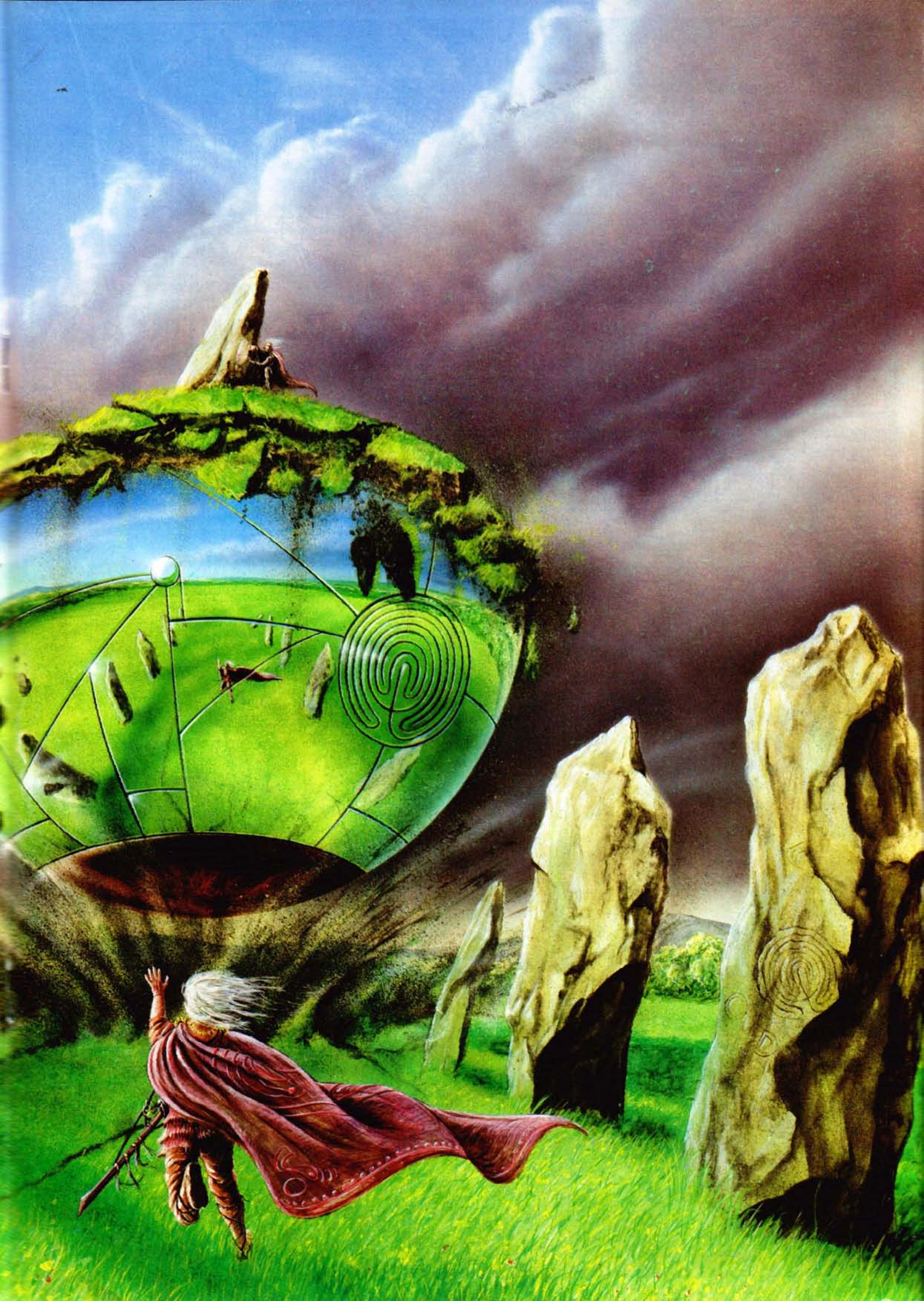

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FEY THE FIERY AND AMBERGRIS THE MAGE DEPART THE ONCE BITTEN TAVERN IN SEARCH OF FEY'S BROTHER, WOWSER, IN THE DUBIOUS WAGON AND COMPANY OF AUMBRY AMBSACE.....
TWENTY HOURS LATER.....
WELL. THIS IS ABOUT FORTY MILES SOUTH OF SCAT. AND WE'VE NOT SEEN A SOUL.
WASSAT? SOMEONE STUMBLING ABOUT OVER THERE
WELL WELL, THE REVEREND EDBUT! PREPARE TO RECEIVE YOUR JUST REWARD
HOLD, PRIEST THE WRETCH WAS TAKEN ALONG WITH WOWSER... HE MAY KNOW SOMETHING
I MUST FEED MYSELF TO THE WATCHLICE
..CANT FIND THEM .... MUST FEED MYSELF TO....
I MUST ERK! TWO PINTS P.. WHERE'S THE ONCE BITTEN?
HUH! I MADE THE MISTAKE OF HITTING HIS HEAD. I'LL TRY A MORE VULNERABLE BIT
I DIDN'T FANCY THAT LAST ONE EITHER, BUT THIS ONE....
.... HE CAME FROM THIS DIRECTION
PCHAW! REVENGE PROFITETH ME NOUGHT... THAT FAIR FILLY MAY NEED MY PROTECTION.
SLICE
SKEWER
I'LL BRING SOME BITS AND PIECES
THIS IS THE ONLY PLACE AROUND HERE. I'LL JUST GO AND ASK IF THEY'VE SEEN WOWSER
ASK THEM IF THEY DO BED AND BREAKFAST
MUTTER. THE LICE THINGS PROBABLY WEREN'T VERY WELL
AT THAT MOMENT, NOT VERY FAR AWAY...
...AND SO, ON THE OFFICIAL BIRTHDAY OF EPICUS THE PICKY, HIS WORSHIPPERS PRESENT HIM WITH A PURE AND UNSULLIED DELICACY, WHICH IS WHERE YOU COME IN...
DONG BONK
HUH? THE WATCHLICE MUST HAVE SENT THAT MORON BACK FOR THE KETCHUP. THIS IS ALL AUTOMATIC, SO....
CLICK
BANG
I'M NOT PURE! I'VE LOOKED UPON NAKED FLESH!... (MY OWN)
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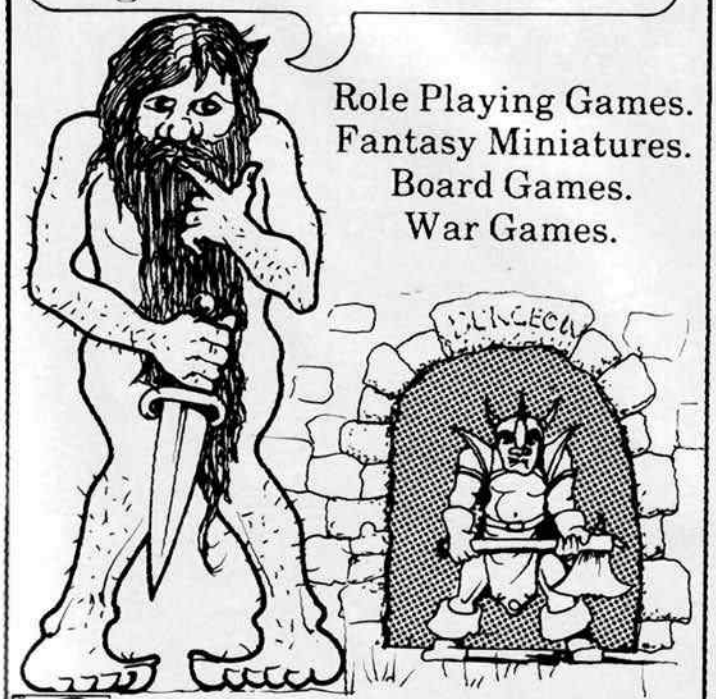

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'WHAT IS PLAY BY MAIL?'

Wayne Bootleg Attempts To Explain . . .

Play By Mail (P.B.M.) has been around for many, many years but it has only been over the last five or so that it has expanded and headed in a new direction.

The first games to be played via post were board games such as Chess, Diplomacy, and Risk. However with the coming of F.R.P., it was only a matter of time before someone had the forethought and inventiveness to run a 'D&D' style campaign by post. In my view this person was Kevin Cropper, the 'Grandaddy' of P.B.M. He constructed a whole planet, which he called **'Crasimoff's World'**, gave it a believable history, hundreds of animals and magic plants, uncountable numbers of encounters and a population that consists of every type of human and non-human ever thought of. He then fashioned a set of rules, and invited people to play by post. To Kevin's delight the game was a success, and he now runs one of the largest P.B.M. companies.

Since then P.B.M. has really taken off, many companies have been formed and they run every conceivable type of game. Via post it is now possible to;

Become the leader of ten people and explore a D&D type world.

Play a starship Captain with a space fleet who tries to conquer the universe.

Lead a tribe of people who explore barren lands and make empires.

Assume the position of an 'Al Capone' type gangster and endeavour to become king of the racketeers.

Lead an American style street gang and try to obtain the toughest reputation!!!

Well, that's enough of the history, as you can see there is a wide range of games available to suit everybody's taste, so how do you start? Well, throughout this magazine you will see many P.B.M. companies adverts giving you full details of their games and you pick one suited to your tastes. Do you want a game that is run via a GM, or a computer? Do you want one set in the year 2000B.C. or 2000A.D. (no, not the comic!!). Do you want to control 1 person or 100? Do you wish to have a specific date when you have to send your results in? When you have finally decided, you then send a certain ammount of your hard-earned cash, which is anything between £1 to £8, to the relevant company and wait for the postman!!

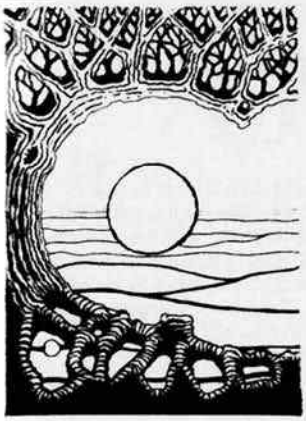
About a week later you should receive your 'start-up' package. This should include the rule book, your start-up sheet, a copy of the latest news letter (most games have one) and depending on the company, various other bits of info to help you on your way. My advice is to read the rule book fully 3 or 4 times at different intervals, before you start. Once you have a good grasp of the rules, complete the start-up sheet. You give the name of your character/ group and various other attributes/abilities which may include:
Age/ height/ background/ history/ aims/ attitudes/ beliefs etc.

You then return this start-up sheet to the GM, but before doing so it is worth keeping a photo copy of it for your own reference. After a further week the GM will then send you a 'turn sheet' with the details of your starting position plus additional info and then it is up to you to go out and survive in the hostile environment out there! You put your anticipated activities on the turn sheet, up- date your attributes and return the turn sheet to the GM. You have then completed your first 'turn'. The GM or computer examines your turn and with the help of ancient and mystic formulae, determines whether or not you have succeeded in your actions. She/he returns this to you, with various comments plus suggestions, and your second turn sheet.You are now on your way, hopefully, to becoming one of the many satisfied PBM players. You should bear in mind that your initial payment will nearly always include a number of pre-paid turns. Once these are exhausted you can expect to pay between £1 to £2.50 per further turn.

One of the most enjoyable parts of the game is communicating with other players. During the course of the game, you will meet other player's characters, or you will read about them in the newsletter. At the same time as returning your turn, you are able to pass on messages to these players. When the GM receives them, He/she will put them in the other players turn and more often than not you will receive a reply. You can thus swap information, maps, rumours and join an alliance that has the same aims as you. I have built up a great many personal friendships wiyh players from such places as Holland, Australia and Germany.

Next Issue I will be reviewing my favourite P.B.M. game 'Saturnalia' and giving out some tips. See Ya' then!!
Wayne.

BOMBER
'TIS O! FOLKS!
ROODY 'ECK!
-OH, GOOD SPOT!
---IT ISN'T EASY BEIN' A MINOTAUR!...
---POOR BOMBER'S LOST COUNT OF HOW MANY TIMES HE'S BEEN TOOK FER A FLESH-EATIN' DEMI-BEAST..... -OR PURSUED PURELY FER A MATTER OF EXPERIENCE POINTS----
GRUNT! GRUNT!
SPANG!
WHIRR! GRIND!
--IT AIN'T ZACKLY ROIT!
---BUT BOMBER ALWAYS TELLS HISSELF, -BE PROUD TO BE A CHUBBY BOVINE! -BE PROUD TO BE A MINOTAUR! AND HOLD HORNS HIGH!
PRIDE!
THUMP!
-WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH OLD BIG RED HAIRY CHOPS THEN, CLYDE?
---AHHH, HE'S JUST A BIT PEEVED BECAUSE SUMBUDDY MISTOOK 'IM FER ONE OF THE WUZZLES AGAIN!
-OI'M JUST A POOR LONESOME MINOTAUR...
POLISH



Mylakhrion

by Brian Lu

There was a time in my youth when I, **Teh Atht**, marvelling at certain thaumaturgical devices handed down to me from the days of my wizard ancestor, **Mylakhrion** of **Tharamoon** (dead these eleven hundred years), thought to question him with regard to the nature of his demise; with that, and with the reason for it. For Mylakhrion had been, according to all manner of myths and legends, the greatest wizard in all **Theem'hdra**, and it concerned me that he had not been immortal. Like many other wizards before me, I too had long sought immortality, but if the great Mylakhrion himself had been merely mortal...surely my own chance for self-perpetuity must be slim indeed.

Thus I went up once more into the Mount of the Ancients, even to the very summit, and there smoked the **Zha-Weed** and repeated rare words by use of which I might seek Mylakhrion in dreams. And lo! - he came to me. Hidden in a grey mist so that only the conical outline of his sorcerer's cap and the slow billowing of his dimly rune-inscribed gown were visible, he came, and in his doomful voice demanded to know why I had called him up from the land of shades, disturbing his centuried sleep.

'Faceless one, ancestor mine, o' mighty and most omniscient sorcerer,' I answered, mindful of Mylakhrion's magnitude. 'I call you up that you may answer for me a question of ultimate importance. A question, aye, and a riddle.'

'There is but one question of ultimate importance to men,' Gloomed Mylakhrion, 'and its nature is such that they usually do not think to ask it until they draw close to the end of their days. For in their youth men cannot foresee the end, and in their middle span they dwell too much upon their lost youth; ah, but in their final days, when there is no future, then they give mind to this great question. And by then it is usually too late. For the question is one of life and death, and the answer is this: Yes , Teh Atht, by great and sorcerous endeavour, a man might truly make himself immortal...

'As to your riddle, that is easy. The answer is that I am indeed immortal! Even as the great ones, as the mighty furnace stars, as time itself, am I immortal. For ever and ever. Here you have called me up to answer your questions and riddles, knowing full well that I am eleven hundred years dead. But do I not take on the aspect of life? Do my lips not speak? And is this not Immortality? Dead I am, but I say to you that I can never truly die.'

Then Mylakhrion spread his arms wide, saying: 'All is answered. Farewell...' And his outline, already misted and dim, began to recede deeper still into Zha-Weed distances, departing from me. Then, greatly daring, I called out:

'Wait, Mylakhrion my ancestor, for our business is not yet done.'

Slowly he came back, reluctantly, until his silhouette was firm once more; but still, as always, his visage was hidden by the swirling mists, and only his dark figure and the gold-glowing runes woven into his robes were visible. Silently he waited, as silently as the tomb of the universe at the end of time, until I spoke yet again:

'This immortality of yours is not the sort I seek, Mylakhrion, which I believe you know well enow. Fleshless, bodyless, except for that shape given you by my incantations and the smoke of the Zha-Weed, voiceless other than when called up from the land of shades to answer my questions...what is that for immortality? No, ancestor mine, I desire much more from the future than that. I want my body and all of its sensations. I want violation and sensibility and all normal lusts and passions. In short, I want to be eternal, remaining as I am now but incorruptible, indestructable! That is immortality!'

'There is no such future for you, Teh Atht!' he immediately gloomed, voice deeply sunken and ominous. 'You expect too much. Even I Mylakhrion of Tharamoon, could not -----achieve----' And here he faltered and fell silent.

I perceived then a seeming agitation in the mist-wreathed phantom; he appeared to tremble, however slightly, and I sensed his eagerness to be gone. Thus I pressed him.

'Oh? And how much did you achieve, Mylakhrion? Is there more I should know? What were your experiments and how much did you discover in your great search for immortality? I believe you are hiding something from me, o' mighty one, and if I must I'll smoke the Zha-Weed again---aye, and yet again---leaving you no rest or peace until you have answered me as I would be answered!'

Hearing me speak thus, Mylakhrion's figure stiffened and dwelled momentarily massive, but then his shoulders drooped and he nodded slowly, saying: 'Have I come to this? That the most meager talents have power to command me? A sad day indeed for Mylakhrion of Tharamoon, when his own descendant uses him so sorely. What is it you wish to know, Teh Atht of Klun?'

'While you were unable to achieve immortality in your lifetime, ancestor mine,' I answered, 'mayhap nathless you can assist me in the discovery of the secret in mine. Describe to me the magicks you used and discarded in your search, the runes you unravelled and put aside, the potions imbibed and unctions applied to no avail, and these I shall take note of that no further time be wasted with them. Then advise me of the paths which you might have explored had time and circumstances permitted. For I will be immortal, and no power shall stay me from it.'

'Ah, youth, it is folly,' quoth he, 'but if you so command---'

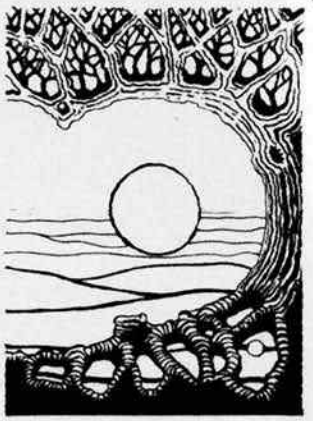
'I do so command.'

'Then hear me out and I will tell all, and perhaps you will understand when I tell you that you cannot have immortality...not of the sort you so fervently desire.'

And so Mylakhrion told me of his search for immortality. He described for me the great journeys he undertook----leaving Tharamoon, his island-mountain aerie, in the care of watch-dog familiars----to visit and confer with other sorcerers and wizards; even journeys across the entire length and breadth of Theem'hdra. Alone he went out into the deserts and plains, the hills and icy wastes in pursuit of this most elusive of mysteries. He visited and talked with Black Yoppaloth of Themnis, with the ghost of Shildakor

the Immortal

an Lumley



in lava-buried Bhur-esh, with Ardatha Ell, a traveller in space and time who lived for a while in the Great Circle Mountains and studied the featureless, vastly cubical houses of the long-gone Ancients, and with Mellatiquel Thom, a cousin- wizard fled to Yaht-Haal when certain magicks turned against him.

And always during these great wanderings he collected runes and cantrips, spells and philtres, powders and potions and other devices necessary to his thaumaturgical experiments. But never a one to set his feet on the road to immortality. Aye, and using vile necromancy he called up the dead from their ashes, even the dead, for his purposes. And this is something I, Teh Atht, have never done, deeming it too loathsome and danger-fraught a deed. For to talk to a dream phantom is one matter, but to hold intercourse with long-rotted liches...that is a vile, vile thing.

But for all his industry, Mylakhrion found only frustration. He conversed with demons and lamias, hunted the legendary phoenix in burning deserts, near-poisoned himself with strange drugs and nameless potions and worried his throat raw with the chanting of oddly cacophonic invocations. And only then did he think to ask himself this question:

If a man desired immortality, what better way than to ask the secret of one already immortal? Aye, and there was just such a one...

Then, when Mylakhrion spoke the name of Cthulhu---the tentacled Great One who seeped down from the stars with his spawn in aeons past to build his cities in the steaming fens of a young and inchoate Earth---I shuddered and made a certain sign over my heart. For while I had not yet had to do with this Cthulhu, his legend was awful and I had heard much of him. And I marvelled that Mylakhrion had dared seek out this great one, even Mylakhrion, for above all other evils Cthulhu was legended to tower like a menhir above mere gravestones.

And having marvelled I listened most attentively to all that my ancestor had to say of Cthulhu and the other great ones, for since their nature was in the main obscure, and being myself a sorcerer with a sorcerer's appetite for mysteries, I was most desirous of learning more of them.

'Aye, Teh Atht,' Mylakhrion continued, 'Cthulhu and his brethren: they must surely know the answer, for they are...'

'Immortal?'

For answer he shrugged, then said: 'Their genesis lies in unthinkable abysses of the past, their end nowhere in sight. Like the cockroach, they were here before man, and they will supercede man. Why, they were oozing like vile ichor between the stars, before the sun spewed out her molten children, of which this world is one; and they will live on when Sol is the merest cinder. Do not attempt to measure their life-spans in terms of human life, nor even geologically. Measure them rather in the births and deaths of planets, which to them are like the ticking of vast clocks. Immortal? As near immortal as matters not. From them I could either beg borrow or steal the secret----but how to go about approaching them?'

I waited for the ghost of my dead ancestor to proceed, and when he did not immediately do so cried out: 'Say on then, forebear mine! Say on and be done with beguilling me!'

He sighed for reply and answered very low: 'As you command...

At length I sought me out a man rumoured to be well versed in the ways of the Great Ones; a hermit, dwelling in the peaks of the Eastern Range, whose visions and dreams were such as were best dreamed far removed from his fellow men. For he was wont to run amuck in the passion of his nightmares, and was reckoned by many to have bathed in the blood of numerous innocents, 'to the greater glory of Loathly Lord Cthulhu!"

I sought him out and questioned him in his high cave, and he showed me the herbs I must eat and whispered the words I must howl from the peaks into the storm. And he told me when I must do these things, that I might then sleep and meet with Cthulhu in my dreams. Thus he instructed me...'

'But as night drew high in this lonely place, my host became drowsy and fell into a fitfull sleep. Aye, and his ravings soon became such, and his strugglings so wild, that I stayed not but ventured back out into the steep slopes and thus made away from him. Descending those perilous crags only by the light of the silvery moon, I spied the madman above me, asleep yet rushing to and fro, howling like a dog and slashing with a great knife in the darkness of the shadows. And I was glad I had not stayed!'

'Thus I returned to Tharamoon, taking a winding route and gathering herbs whereof the hermit had spoken, until upon my arrival I had with me all the elements required for the invocation, while locked in my mind I carried the words of power. And lo!---I called up a great storm and went out onto the balcony of my highest tower, and there I howled into the wind the words, and I ate of the herbs mixed so and so, and a swoon came upon me so that I fell as though dead into a sleep deeper than the arms of Shoosh, Goddess of the Still Slumbers. Ah, but deep though this sleep was, it was by no means still!

'No, that sleep was --- unquiet! I saw the sepulcher of Cthulhu in the Isle of Arlyeh, and I passed through the massive and oddly-angled walls of that alien stronghold into the presence of the Great One himself!'

Here the outlines of my ancestor's ghost became strangely agitated, as if its owner trembled uncontrollably, and even the voice of Mylakhrion wavered and lost much of its doomful portent. I waited for a moment before crying: 'Yes go on---what did the awful Lord of Arlyeh tell you?'

'...Many things, Teh Atht. He told me the secrets of space and time, the legends of lost universes out beyond the limits of man's immagination; he outlined the hideous truths behind the N'tang Tapestries, the lore of dimensions other than the familiar three. And at last he told me the secret of immortality!'

'But the latter he would not reveal until I had made a pact with him. And this pact was that I would be his priest for ever and ever, even until his coming. And believing that later I might break free of any strictures Cthulhu

As he finished speaking, I stepped closer to the swirling wall of mist where Mylakhrion stood, black-robed and enigmatic in mystery. He did not seem so tall now, no taller than I myself, and for all the power he had wielded in life he no longer awed me. Should I, Teh Atht, fear a ghost? Even the ghost of the worlds greatest sorcerer?

'Still you have not told me that which I most desire to know,' I accused.

'Ah, you grow impatient,' he answered. 'Even as the smoke of the Zha-Weed loses its potency and the waking world beckons to you, so your impatience grows. Very well, let me now repeat what Cthulhu told me of immortality:

'He told me that the only way a mere man, even the mightiest wizard among wizards, might perpetuate himself down all the ages was by means of reincarnation! But alas, such as my return would be it would not be complete; for I must needs inhabit another's body, another's mind, and unless I desired a weak body and mind I should certainly find resistance in the person of that yet unborn other. In other words I must share that body, that mind! But surely, I reasoned, even partial immortality would be better than none at all. Would you not agree, descendant mine?...'

'Of course, I would want a body---or part of one---close in appearance to my own, and a mind to suit. Aye, and it must be a keen mind and curious of mysteries great and small: that of a sorcerer! And indeed it were better if my own blood should flow in the veins of---'

'Wait!' I then cried, searching the mist with suddenly fearful eyes, seeking to penetrate its greyness that I might gaze upon Mylakhrion's unknown face. 'I...I find your story most-...disturbing...my ancestor, and---'

'----And yet you must surely hear it out, Teh Atht,' he interrupted, doom could place upon me, I agreed to the pact and swore upon it. In this my fate was sealed, my doom ordained, for no man may escape the curse of Cthulhu once its seal is upon him...'

'And lo, when I wakened I did all as I had been instructed to attain the promised immortality; and on the third night Cthulhu visited me in dreams, for he knew me now and how to find me, and commanded me as his servant and priest to set about certain tasks. Ah, but these were tasks which would assist the Great One and his prisoned brethren in breaking free of the chains placed upon them in aeons past by the wondrous Gods of Eld, and what use to be immortal forever more in the unholy service of Cthulhu? '

'Thus on the fourth day, instead of doing as bidden, I set about protecting myself as best I could from Cthulhu's wrath, working a veritable frenzy of magicks to keep him from me...to no avail! In the middle of the fifth night, wearied nigh unto death by my thaumaturgical labours, I slept, and again Cthulhu came to me. And he came in great anger-----even Great anger!'

'For he had broken down all my sorcerous barriers, destroying all spells and protective runes, discovering me for a traitor to his cause. And as I slept he drew me up from my couch and led me through the labyrinth of my castle, even to the feet of those steps which climbed up to the topmost tower. He placed my feet upon those stone stairs and commanded me to climb, and when I would have fought him he applied monstrous pressures to my mind that numbed me and left me bereft of will. And so I climbed, slowly and like unto one of the risen dead, up to that high tower, where without pause I went out onto the balcony and threw myself down upon the needle rocks a thousand feet below...'

'Thus was my body broken, Teh Atht, and thus Mylakhrion died.'

once more echoing in his voice. And as he spoke he moved flowingly forward until at last I could see the death-lights in his shadowy eyes. Closer still he came saying:

'To ensure that this yet unborn one would be all the things I desired of him, I set a covenant upon my resurrection in him. And this condition was that his curiosity and sorcerous skill must be such that he would first call me up from the Land of Shades ten times, and that only then would I make myself manifest in his person...And how many times have you called me up, Teh Atht?'

'Ten times----fiend!' I choked. And feeling the chill of subterranean pools flowing in my bones, I rushed upon him to seize his shoulders in palsied hands, staring into a face now visible as a reflection in the clear glass of a mirror. A mirror? Aye! For though the face was that of an old, old man --- it was nonetheless my own!

And without more ado I fled, waking to a cold, cold morn atop the Mount of the Ancients, where my tethered yak watched me with worried eyes and snorted a nervous greeting...

But that was long ago and in my youth, and now I no longer fear Mylakhrion, though I did fear him greatly for many a year. For in the end I was stronger than him, aye, and he got but a small part of me. In return I got all of his magicks, the lore of a lifetime spent in the discovery of dark secrets.

All of this and immortality, too, of a sort; and yet even now Mylakhrion is not beaten. For surely I will carry something of him with me down the ages. Occasionally I smile at the thought and feel laughter rising in me like a wind over the desert...but rarely. The laughter hardly sounds like mine at all and its echoes seem to linger o'erlong.

Horrific Routes In Role Gaming

BY DAVE LOCK

Question: When is a plagiarist not a plagiarist? **Answer**: When he's busy ripping off an author's ideas or story line and making game scenarios from them.

So far there isn't a law against it, and logically, the use of an author's name and some of his plot and characters is more likely to enhance his readership than diminish it.

Already the books of such fantasy writers as Tolkien, Herbert and Moorcock have been successfully plundered, but whereas the science fiction/ alien world game is well established, little inspiration has so far been drawn from the genre of horror fiction.

Why is the horror writer important?- Two reasons immediately spring to mind: First of all he is writing in a 'real world' setting. This not only encourages realistic role playing, but it provides the kind of problems and pitfalls not encountered in alien environments (eg. the necessity of working within an accepted social and beaurocratic framework).

Also, as much data as necessary with respect to period, transport, weaponry, geography and social mores can be provided from real sources.

A second useful feature is that the stories are (almost) always short. This means that the number of potential plots provided by an anthology should be far greater than a full length novel. Eg. **Stephen King's 'Night Shift'** contains a grand variety of unique plots- Vampires, possessed machinery and Cthuloid Subterranean Monsters to name but a few, whereas the convoluted style of his novels provides much less in the way of clear cut scenarios.

The only horror writer to have appeared so far in the fantasy game stakes is **H.P. Lovecraft**, and the choice is hardly surprising in view of his popularity among afficionados and the continuity of his plots.

The notorious 'Cthulhu Mythos' is already figuring in a major fantasy game, and the numerous plots created by Lovecraft and his fellow Arkham House writers such as **August Derleth, Clark Ashton Smith** and **Robert Bloch** are bound to guarantee its success.

A further advantage is that writers such as **Stephen King** and **Ramsey Campbell** are still using Lovecraft's ideas in contemporary settings. Eg. Stories such as King's **'Graveyard Shift'** or Campell's 'The Franklyn Paragraphs', and **Colin Willson's** novel **'The Philosopher's Store'** successfully sustain and develop the nightmare worlds that Lovecraft created. For the premier horror writers of our time to consistently breathe fresh life into Lovecraft's creatures says a great deal for the potency of his Myths.

The idea of cosmic monsters breaking into the world via magic or dimensional gateways is not, however, unique to Lovecraft.

William Hope Hodgson, in his **'Carnacki the Ghostfinder'** stories, predates Lovecraft by some twenty five years, and it is not inconceivable that the Cthulhu Mythos may have had its roots in them, because there are close similarities between Hodgson's creations and those of Lovecraft, both in their extra- terrestrial origin and the soul- blasting effect they have on human beings.

The fundamental difference lies in the fact that whereas Lovecraft's monsters are predominantly physical, (albeit with paranormal powers), Hodgson's are pure elemental evil, from which the investigator is often only saved by Divine Intervention.

Hodgson's material is attractive to the game player because it presents strong characterisation (something that Lovecraft lacks because his own personality tends to dominate his stories), together with the image of the **'Psychic Detective'**.

Hodgson's character **'Carnacki'** is portrayed as a man who uses a mixture of science, arcane knowledge and pure luck to overcome the 'Outer Montrosities' by which he is continually confronted, as in **'The Hog'** and **'The Whistling Room'**.

The games player will find in these stories a considerable number of variables which control the fate of monster and investigator, so making them a source -book of great value.

Hodgson also gives a great deal of detail in establishing the ground rules and background of his Mythos, so simplifying the task of writing game plans. Where Lovecraft uses **'The Necronomicon'** as the source of arcane power, Hodgson's equivalent work is known as the **'Sigsand Manuscript'**. In the story 'The Hog' Hodgson describes the **'Outer Circle'** in which his monsters are bred....'The Monstrosities of the Outer Circle are malignant towards all that we consider most desirable, just in the same way a shark or tiger may be considered malignant in the physical sense...'

'....we have the conception of a huge psychic world, bred out of the physical, lying far outside this world and completely encompassing it - except for the doorways...'

The 'Psychic Detective' is a character which is a valuable tool of the horror writer, and several others are worth mentioning;-

Seabury Quinn's 'Jules Le Grandin', a sanguine Frenchman replete with 'Sacre Bleu's' and 'Nom Du Nom's' confronts ghouls, vampires and mad doctors with equal aplomb, whilst his bungling, Watson- like assistant **Trowbridge** trots behind like a dog. In **'The House of Horror'**, Le Grandin discovers a fiendish surgeon who, maddened by his son's suicide following a failed love affair, wreaks revenge on the female kind by kidnapping girls and performing unspeakable operations on them.

More supernatural elements are introduced in **'Glamour'** where an ongoing actress regains her youth by absorbing the life force from young female companions.

E and H Herons' character **'Flaxman-Low'** is another detective assailed by malevolent and elemental hauntings.

In **'The Story of the Spaniards, Hammersmith'** the investigator is confronted by spectre of a leper, animated by malign forces to re-enact a murder committed a century earlier, whilst **'Y and Manor House'** disgorges a long- undead resident bent on multiple killing.

Unfortunately, few other examples remain in print-- but I'm still researching them, but while I'm on the subject, what about **Quatermass**?

Nigel Kneal's iconoclastic scientist bursts through the scepticism of the establishment hierarchy to save the world from all- consuming extra- terrestrials time after time.

Surely plenty of scenarios could be derived from the notion of creatures capable of converting all living matter into a single, corporate being, or mind- controlling, telekinetic martians, as in **'The Quatermass Experiment'** and **'Quatermass and The Pit'**. These stories are already written as TV screenplays, which would enable players to quickly absorb characterisation.

However, before I get too enmeshed in science- fiction, I feel that I ought to touch upon a part of the genre which is loosely called 'Gothic'. This term covers a multitude of stories, ballads etc. mostly written prior to 1800, but ironically, the two writers who in my opinion exemplify the form were both writing in the latter part of the nineteenth and the first part of the twentieth century.

The writers in question are **Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu** and **Montague Rhodes James**. Both deal with fiendish and malevolent elementals from supernatural origins and from within the mind itself.

Although **Le Fanu** generates mind- wringing terror in such classic stories as **'Green Tea'**, it is **M.R. James** who is more likely to prove a source of material for the fantasy gamer. This is mainly because there is an element of continuity in his stories stemming from his profound knowledge of medieval history, and partly because of the subtle way in which he conjures horrors by suggestion rather than by overtly naming them.

A number of his stories, such as **'The Treasure of Abbot Thomas'** and **'Casting the Runes'** concern quests for ancient knowledge or treasure which are guarded by supernatural forces. No headless horsemen or creeping nuns these!;- but soul- crunching demons unlikely to be deflected from their purpose by bell, book or candle. Any interloper attempting to aquire hidden wealth protected by these adversaries has a paltry chance of survival, so any game scenarios based on these stories should have a high risk- element for those engaged in such quests.

James does not usually suggest escape routes for his characters once the supernatural force has been activated, and so games may be envisaged in which the hidden guardian must be detected and/ or avoided. In the event of the demon being roused, the hunter then becomes the hunted and the game can go off at any number of tangents.

His stories are also rich in period detail, which should provide an in- depth source of atmosphere, time and place.

Although I have concentrated in this article on the short story, it would be inappropriate to close without commenting on two current purveyers of the hideous, **Peter Straub** and **Stephen King**. Both contribute recurring themes which are of potential interest in role-gaming.

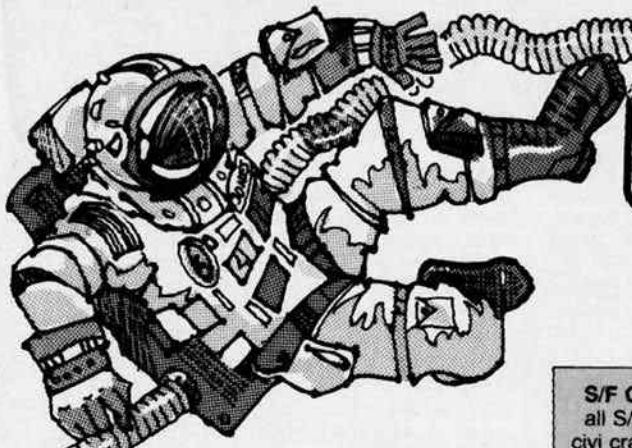
King, in such novels as **'The Stand'** and **'The Dead Zone'** presents fundamental confrontations between Good and Evil, in which the good elements are often uncertain of how to use the powers they possess, whilst the evil forces are required to coalesce into a certain pattern before they can do battle.

Straub, on the other hand, works on the principle of recurring evil events (eg. **'Ghost Story'**, **'Full Circle'**, **'Floating Dragon'**) which the defenders of good (and hence, the games- player) must piece together and understand in order to win out.

In conclusion, picture if you will this scenario outline:

A creature of vast size and, in its normal state, almost fluid in form, living in cave systems beneath the earth. It feeds on all ambulatory life-forms and, having done so, can divide into parts and accurately mimic the shape of whatever it has eaten in order to trap further prey; and needless to say, it is invulnerable to all known weapons!

Good Luck!



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'The continuing Voyages. James Doohan, Walter Koenig and William Shatner keep on Trekin' as Scotty, Chekov and Kirk.'
Photo: (c) Paramount

VOYAGES BEYOND

by WENDY GRAHAM

What is Science Fiction? Hard to define, that's what. At least in a short pithy epithet, as I've been discovering since our noble editor asked me to write this. I've thought till I've thunked out, I've called other people who I reckon know about science fiction and been met by the same silence and wave of sympathy for the task which met the editor when he asked me, and finally, after a time of cogitation I've come up with what at best is half-way there;

"Science Fiction is the literature of extrapolation, by and for those not content with the established order."

Most folk can spot SF (and don't call it Sci-Fi unless you want to be pitied as a rank newcomer, by the way), and for most of the literate of the world one has to acknowledge that SF is Star Trek, Dr. Who, Isaac Asimov and Arthur C Clark, with Star Wars on the Big Screen.

Narrow it down from that and you get Star Trek and Star Wars. I state that because it is manifestly clear from the audience figures for both that they have reached more of the world's population than any other SF, and more than Just about any TV programme or film come to that.

SF has exploded in the last score years, no doubt about it. What I feel is to 'Blame' for that explosion more than anything else, was the cancellation of the Star Trek TV series and it's immediate sale into syndication worldwide.

People everywhere started watching the first ever really good SF made available by the media, and discovered SF, and still are, for during it's recent BBC2 run Star Trek was still getting a place (as high as 4) in the BBC2 top ten every week, in spite of an unfavourable transmission time (6PM), and the programme is 20 years old this fall.

Even older, of course, and perhaps more dear to British hearts is good old Doctor Who. Originally conceived as a programme to painlessly teach children history, the strength of the format and it's flexibility have been shown by it's 23-year run, six changes of leading actor, and of course by the outcry which burst upon Michael Grade when he decided that it had wandered away from that format and style. (It might be heresy but I partially agree with him).

Let us move to the cinema, for, with the big budgets generally necessary to make SF, that is where it has been plugging away for many years, right back to the dreadful days when they made such groaners as 'Plan Nine From Outer Space' (now a sort of classic in it's own right – you have to see it to disbelieve it). But even years ago there were classics on the genre- Metropolos, George Pal's Destination Moon. More recently the benchmark was '2001 A Space Odyssey'. Then came Star Wars. Glitzy, corny, obvious, and like E.T., manipulative and tailored to please. But no-one can deny that they pleased a great many people. They made a lot of money too, which is why, after many years of shaking their heads and saying that they Just weren't commercial, SF films are now being produced in such numbers that there is a positive glut and we are in danger of a "Return of the Killer Tomatoes" style of film.

When it comes to the printed word, SF has suffered as much as any other genre from the production of pulp, if not more so. There was a time when the very good battled for type with the sort of plot where you could get away with any number of writing faults so long as your characters wore space suits and carried ray guns (which they fired as often as possible at as many BEMs (Bug-Eyed Monsters) as possible).

Probably the first ever SF story was written in the 2nd century AD by a greek satirist called Lucien. This widely-read work, which Lucien admitted was all lies, hence it's title 'The True History', concerned travel to the moon:- A sailing ship was caught in a giant water spout which after a (surprisingly accurate) seven-day Journey landed on the moon. There the King of the moon and the King of the sun were about to go to war over their respective claims on the planet Venus.

Another early writer was Cyrano de Bergerac, whose 'Voyages to the Moon and Sun' used dew power to propel spaceships. Cyrano observed that early morning dew disappears as the sun comes out -- it must be sucked up. 'Bottle enough and you too can be sucked up into space' -- a charming idea.

The first modern SF writer was Jules Verne, whose 'From the Earth to the Moon' was published in 1865.

Verne got a lot of it right, from having the correct escape velocity (7 miles per second) to having his launch site not far from Cape Canaveral and his astronauts splashed down. But he missed on having his ship fired from a cannon (every being inside would be squashed to a Jelly by G-Forces) and he thought the travellers would only be weightless when the Moon's gravity balanced the Earth's at one point on the trip.

None-the-less, Verne and H.G.Wells were the first of the modern writers who were not satisfied with writing about this planet alone. Their works are still classics of the genre, and rightly so.

Who, though, are the modern greats of SF writing? My particular favourite authors are the Prolific Isaac Asimov, whose propounding of the 'Three Laws of Robotics' has not only influenced his peers but shown the way for an operating system, for when robotics comes of age and we all have one for the housework; Arthur C. Clark, once again for his blending of science with fiction (it was Arthur C. who discovered the geostationery orbit for satellites) and Anne McCaffrey, whose 'Pern and Ballybran' inhabitants simply delight me.

The trend in SF these days is for the BEMs to be friendly types, while a few decades ago the only good alien was a dead one. Running counter to this, however, are three successful examples - American TV's 'V' saga where we have a very gullible human race taken in time and again by nasty alien lizards who manage to disguise their loathsome appearance most of the time (thereby saving a fortune in studio make-up and enabling human actors to play them). The scent that these lizards are baddies has dropped with only a few humans, so, every week you get a sort of modern Saxons V Normans and Robin Hood story.

To digress slightly, another modern Robin Hood In Space series was of course the much lamented 'Blake's 7'. RPGers could do worse than use the principles of 'Blakes as the basic for characters. I've had endless fun playing a Villa-Type, marvelous scope for getting drunk, running away and coming up with the solution when Avon is stumped in a crisis.

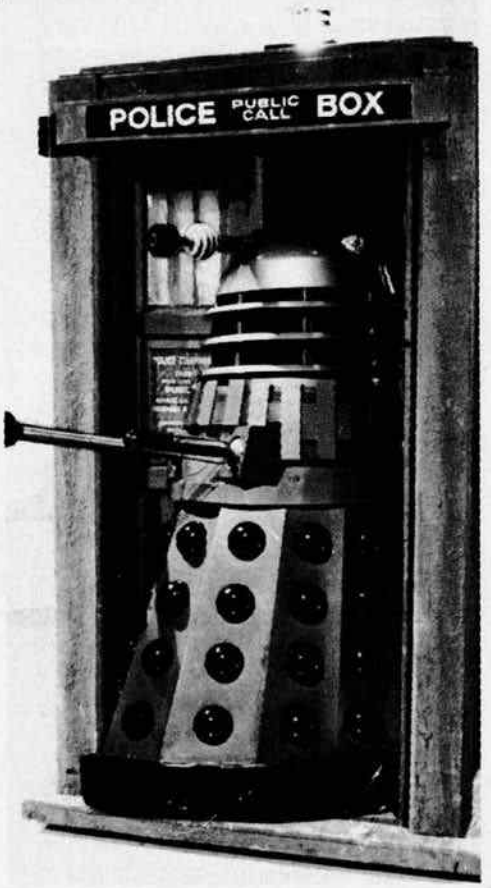
'The Good Guys. 'V'.'
Photo: (c) Warner Brothers

'Blake's 7' was created by Terry Nation, who also invented perhaps the single most successful bad alien in the history of SF -- the Dalek. Even though there was one huge flaw in their concept;- "you only had to run down a flight of stairs and you had them well and truly screwed" - Jon Pertwee. They and creator Davros have always been the apotheosis of single minded evil.

Nation also created 'The Survivors', a near-present day SF series on a world where humanity had very nearly been wiped out by pandemic illness.

To return to the subJect. For those who like their BEMs bad and have missed them of late there is the Venture SF series, which is republishing the best of this genre.

Also blasting invading animal aliens is author David Gerrold, in the series 'War Against the Chtorr'.
David is best known for his Star Trek episode 'The Trouble With Tribbles', though he's also written much more SF including an excellent time-travel story 'The Man Who Folded Himself' and a number of scripts for a new collection of Twilight Zone stories, yet to be shown in Britain,



Normally, I would shy away from re-

' Where could a two-headed, three-armed runaway President of the Galaxy team up with an over-educated (degree in Math and another in Astrophysics) unemployed brunette/blond from Islington?

In Hitch-hikers Guide to the Galaxy, that's where. Mark Wing-Davey and BBC special effects play Zaphod Beeblebrox and Sandra Dickinson (wife of Dr.Who Peter Davison) plays Trillian in the TV version of the radio play of the book etc etc.'

Photo: (c) BBC 1984

' An out of scale Dalek trying to emerge from the 'Tardis' and immediately hitting trouble with the step...'

Photo: (c) BBC 1983

commending anything but single books to the newcomer to SF, and my allergy to the current spate of trilogies for the sake of trilogies is probably quite well-known but David, like Anne McCaffrey with her 'Pernese Dragons' simply found themselves with more story than a single book.

Another weighty saga (a few lb at the very least) is Frank Herbert's 'Dune', which was recently translated to the cinema, and millions had to read the book to find out what on earth the film was about. (How many hit points for a worm? I wonder!).

Still on and off, depending on who tells you, is the film of the TV series of the books of the radio programme of the computer game of the towel, Hitch-hikers Guide to the Galaxy. You should be able to get autographed copies of Douglas Adams' epic fairly easily. (unautographed ones are rarer), however, while one might fashionably sneer at the success of 'Hitch-Hikers' one must applaud the ingenuity and creativity of the story. And aren't we all really a bit like Arthur Dent who woke up one morning with a hangover and found himself a couple of hours later thrown off an alien spaceship with a fish in his ear? One might even argue that Arthur is the typical SF reader. We all want to travel...but do we dare?

Having mentioned live theatre I would neglect my subJect if I didn't mention 'The Rocky Horror Show', later made into an equally successful film. This is the only SF stage musical of which I know, and like the original Frankenstein story in which it has its roots (with a graft of stock from the days of 'science fiction double features) it is arguably pure SF.

Rocky has become a sort of sub-cult of it's own, though I sometimes wonder how many of the be-basqued fans realise that they've become hooked on SF.... TheTime Warp-ers are certainly some of the most dedicated fans, as was evidenced by the audience figures for the latest tour by the show, starring (unlikely as it seemed beforehand) piano-playing Bobby Crush.

While on the subJect of live performances I've Just heard of an equally unlikely one - Doctor Who on Ice.

The Doc will be showing another facet of his multitude of talents (and presumably another sub-regeneration since Colin Baker is filming the next series) in Blackpool all summer as one of the sets for the annual season ice show at the pleasure beach. As far as I know this will be the Doctor's only appearance in Blackpool this summer - the BBC has closed down the exhibition which had been a feature of the Golden Mile for many years. Anyone who went last year won't be surprised, it was allowed to get very tatty.

So...that is a brief trip round the present and past of SF. I haven't touched on fantasy, a sort of sibling genre, since that would involve a whole different kettle of mermaids. The difference between the genres being, near as I can define it; You can have mermaids in SF if wherever and whenever you are in the story there is a good reason for there being mermaids. In fantasy, mermaids, bless'em, Just are.

SF can cross any literary discipline; you can have romance among the stars, you can have detective stories (witness some of Isaac Asimov's stories with a robot detective), you can have costume--- historical pieces (Dr.Who) comedy (Hitch-Hikers).. well, in fact anything you want.

And the most unlikely people write it. Astronomer Patrick Moore has written 23 SF novels. Now all out of print, they're all for younger readers and in a 'boy's own' vein, but ripping yarns nonetheless and worth getting hold of if you come across one (if you do and don't want it I'd certainly be interested.)

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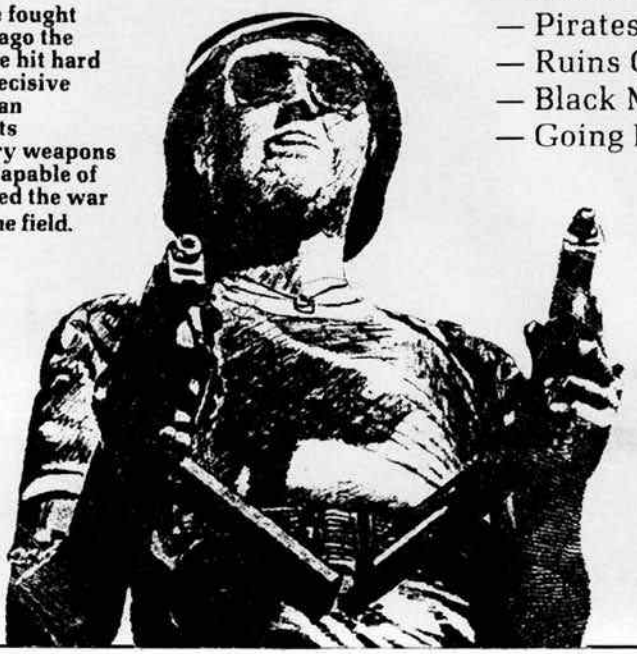
Now what do you do?



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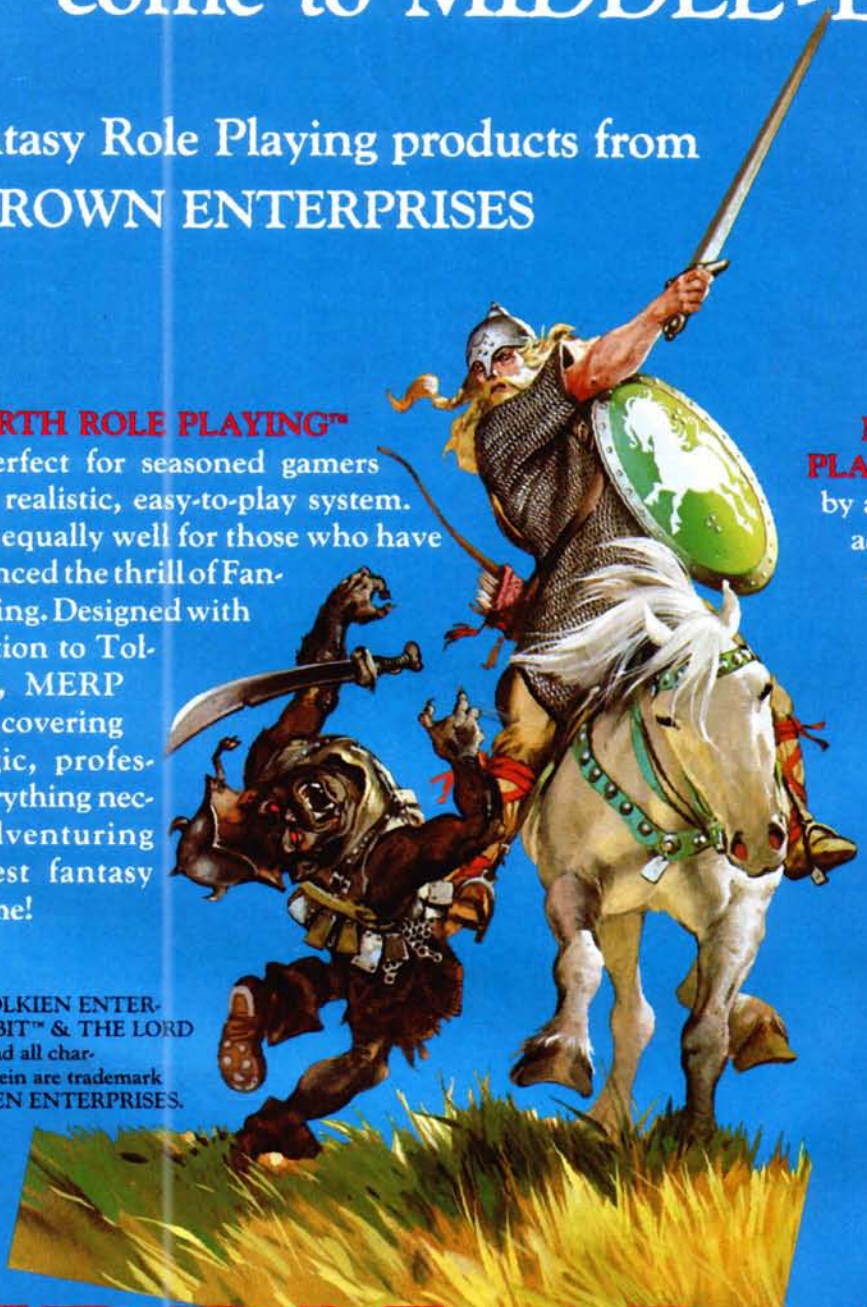

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The Dreamgate Temple

KATSUMUSHI-O-TERA
THE DRAGONFLY TEMPLE

A SCENARIO FOR BUSHIDO/AD & D BY ANTHONY R. ALLAN

Midnight at the Inn of the Wild Pinks

In the lesser hour of the rat, a burly figure strode along a road in the mountain village of **Hirofu** towards the **Inn of the Wild Pinks**. His expression was rather smug; his left hand rested on the hilt of his **Wakizashi**, his right drummed idly on his stomach, under his blouse.

At the inn, he was received by the mama-san, **Kiku**, who recognised him as a **Yamabushi of Katsumushi-o-Tera** by his headband and his dragonfly patterned skirt. After drinking plum brandy in the common room of the inn, where the other patrons sat around drinking and playing Dice or Shogi, he retired to a private room on the upper floor with **Gyoko**, a snake-eyed geisha with fine blue-black hair and fashionably blackened teeth.

In the room were the many instruments of the girl's profession: a three- stringed samisen, a tea set, harigata, and so on. However, the monk did without any formal prelude, and took Gyoko straight to the Futon.

Some time later, the other revellers were disturbed by a clattering from the room above them and the scrambling of feet over the roof and away into the night, followed shortly by Kiku's strangled cry as she found the courtesan's limp body amongst the broken shoji. And of the visitor, but for his deed, there was little sign...

General Introduction

The first section of this scenario gives the geographical and political background to the scenario, the second describes the location of the adventure, and the third introduces the action. The referee is advised to carefully read the whole scenario well before play, particularly as many of the details of the adventure have been left to his discretion.

Dewa Province

Cherry Blossoms-
Lights of Years Past,
- Basho

Dewa province is situated on the western coast of northern **Honshu Island**. Its total area is about twice that shown on the map; it is one of the largest provinces in Nippon. The terrain varies between coastal plains (wholly devoted to farming) and rugged mountain areas. The Kami have blessed Dewa province with an abundant supply of food (both fish and rice); however, there is a lack of certain materials, such as timber (which is imported from the provinces of central Honshu).

Centres of population are scattered throughout the province; so is political power. No single Daimyo is recognised by the Shogunate as being responsible for the whole province. In the north of Dewa there are five major clans: **Aoki**, **Hagiwara**, **Kawaguchi**, **Okazaki**, and **Takagi**. Of these, the Okazaki Clan wields the most power; it controls the city of **Akita** and a large area of prime land along the coast, north and south of the city. Of next importance is the Kawaguchi Clan, which controls an area of highland on the border with Mutsu province. Because of its importance to this scenario, the Kawaguchi clan is discussed in some detail later.

The map of the province indicates the territorial divisions within Dewa; each territory is presumed to be ruled by one Samurai Clan. Most of the smaller clans are strongly allied to one of the major clans. The influence of the 'Big Five' extends beyond the borders drawn on the map. Most noteably, the area nominally under the control of the **Igarashi** Clan is, in fact, ruled by the Aoki Clan; Igarashi Makato is merely the puppet of Aoki Tohru.

The five major clans are loosely allied by various treaties and marital ties. However, there is not a little rivalry between these clans and, though they are ostensibly friendly at the moment, the situation is potentially unstable.

The Clans of Dewa Province:

The Aoki Clan:

Status Factor : 0.6
Head : Aoki Tohru
Area Controlled : See map; also the area nominally under Igarashi control
Allied Clans : Kawaguchi
Friendly Clans : Hagiwara, Okazaki, Takagi, and allied clans
Hostile Clans : None in Dewa province
Mon : Three stylised cucumbers arranged in a circle

The Hagiwara Clan:

Status Factor : 0.6
Head : Hagiwara Tadayuki
Area Controlled : See map
Allied Clans : Kawaguchi, Okazaki, Others
Friendly Clans : Aoki, Takagi, and allied clans
Hostile Clans : None in Dewa province
Mon : Four open diamonds

The Igarashi Clan:

Status Factor : 0.3
Head : Igarashi Makoto
Area Controlled : See map
Allied, Friendly, and Hostile Clans : See Aoki Clan
Mon : A stylized white-hand drum (not illustrated)

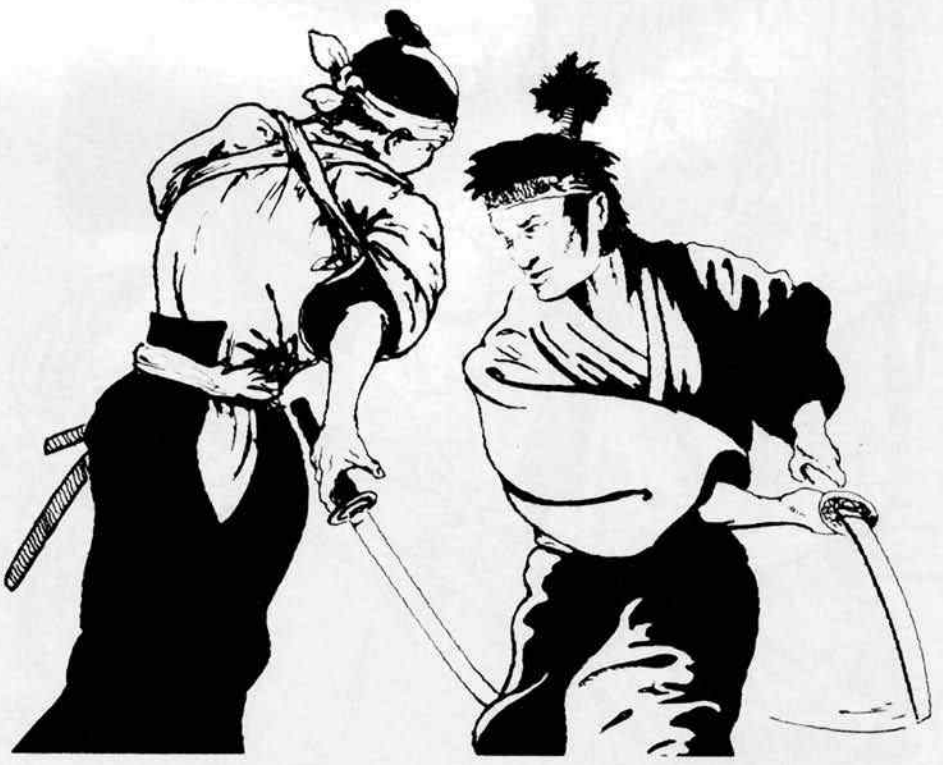
The Kawaguchi Clan:

Status Factor : 0.7
Head : Kawaguchi Takashi
Principals : Junya (Kawaguchi Tsutomu),
Senior advisor ; Kawaguchi Mahiko, General of the armies
Area Controlled : See map
Allied Clans : Aoki, Hagiwara, Okazaki, Takagi
Friendly Clans : Many others in Dewa province
Hostile Clans : None in Dewa province
Mon : A Diamond within a frame with overlapping ends

Notes :

The Kawaguchi Clan is noted and respected for its piety; many of the senior members of the clan (eg. Junya) are high level Buddhist Gakusho. Though Takashi-sama has not sought political power, the Kawaguchi clan has, through its alliances, found itself to be the King-Pin of peace in the north of Dewa province.

The Kawaguchi Clan has, for a long time, actively supported Katsumushi-o-Tera, which is highly regarded throughout the north of Honshu for the quality of its Buddhist teaching and the excellence of its Yamabushi as warriors.



The Okazaki Clan:

Status Factor : 0.8
Head : Okazaki Keiichi
Area Controlled : see map
Allied Clans : Hagiwara, Kawaguchi, others
Friendly Clans : Aoki, Takagi, and allied clans
Hostile Clans : None in Dewa province
Mon : A Stylised Cherry Blossom

The Takagi Clan:

Status Factor : 0.6
Head : Takagi Azuma
Area Controlled : see map
Allied Clans : Kawaguchi, others
Friendly Clans : Aoki, Hagiwara, Okazaki, Takagi, and allied clans
Hostile Clans : None in Dewa province
Mon : Four Commas arranged in a circle with their heads not touching

Other Clans:

Status Factor : 0.5
Area Controlled 6: see map
Allied Clans : one of the 'Big Five', other than Kawaguchi,and that clans allies
Friendly Clans : Most others in Dewa province
Hostile Clans : (rarely) one or two of the smaller clans in Dewa province

Yakuza in Dewa Province

There is no province-wide Yakuza organisation in Dewa. However, the underground is active in Akita and its environs, despite suppression by the Okazaki Clan. Other Oyabun control criminal activity in the rural areas.

Ninja in Dewa Province

Ninja activity in the province falls under the sway of the **Clan** of the Night Hawks (clan F), whose base is actually located in Mutsu province. Because of the generally quiet political situation in the province, the Night Hawks are going through a lean period; only contracts from Mutsu province are keeping them in business. (The referee, if he feels it necessary, may decide the exact location and make up of the Night Hawks' base.)

The City of Akita

Akita is the principal seat of power of the Okazaki clan and so serves as the capital of Dewa province. It is a 'D' class city of about 10000 souls. The city is guarded by a level 4 citadel which has a usual garrison of 2000 warriors (Okazaki Samurai and Ashigaru).

Temples in Akita include **Aiki-o-Tera** (the temple of divine harmony), a class 'D' temple of normal orientation, and **Sango-o-Tera** (the coral temple), a contemplative temple of class 'E'. One of the most noteable Shinto shrines in Akita is **Kensei-Jinga** (the shrine of the Sword-Saint), dedicated to the Kami of a famous Okazaki samurai, Takashi.

The Okazaki clan runs a class 'B martial school, **Sakura-Kwajuen-Ryu** (the cherry orchard school; a cherry blossom is the mon of the clan), which will accept any Bushi as a pupil, but will give preference to the members of the Okazaki and allied clans. A (class 'E) specialist school of interest is **Denko-Kogeki-Ryu** (the lightening thrust school), run by the Ronin Hosotami Yutaka, who teaches Sojutsu with piercing Thrust Okuden.

Katsumushi-o-Tera (The Dragonfly Temple)

The Dragonfly or 'Tonbo', was often known as Katsumushi (insect of victory), and was admired by samurai for its warlike appearance. It was thus chosen as the emblem for this (class 'C) Yamabushi temple and martial school.

Abbot : Hidezuki Tetsuaki
Sensei : Terazawa Otake
Staff : Fujio, Hisakazu, Eguchi Ryuchi, Shoichi, Terazawa, Takeyuji, Yutaka
Available Skills :
see character descriptions
Associated Village : Class 'F, Level 'C
Temple Troops :
225 LEVEL '1 Yamabushi
(level 1 Bushi / Level 1 Gakusho)
75 LEVEL '2 Yamabushi
(level 2 Bushi / Level 1 Gakusho)
15 Officers (level 3 Bushi / Level
1D2 Gakusho)
Commander : Otake-Sensei

Notes :

The temple is well known for the high standard of its tuition; all study here is at a bonus of 1 to the learning rate. If accepted as students, Buddhist Gakusho and pious laymen can expect a reduction in fees of up to 50%. The chance of any Shinto characters being taken on as a student is reduced by 10%, and fees may be increased by up to 50%. Friends, retainers, etc. of students will be accomodated in the village for a reasonable fee.

Map & House plans

The map shows the general disposition of buildings in the temple grounds.

Plans of some of the buildings are shown in detail. The referee should decide which rooms are used for what purpose(s) by the people in each household, especially which rooms are used at night. Terazawa Otake-Sensei and Eguchi Ryuchi are likely to have at least one room where guests or important students may sleep. If a student is of particularly high rank (eg.Samurai), Fujio's house (presently occupied by Shoichi and Yutaka) may be given over to him.

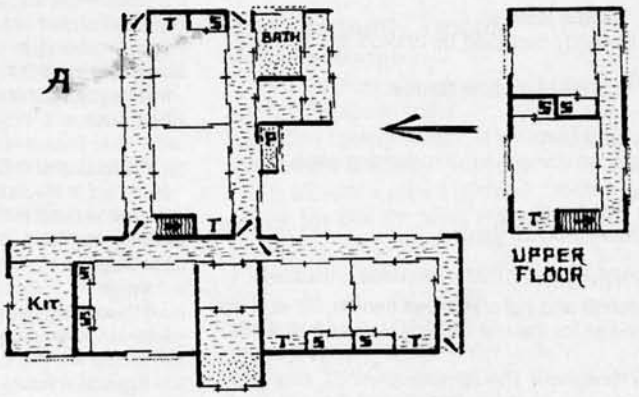
A) Terezawa Otake-Sensei's House.

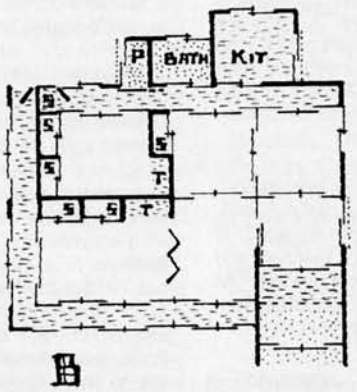
B) The Abbots House
(currently occupied by Fujio).

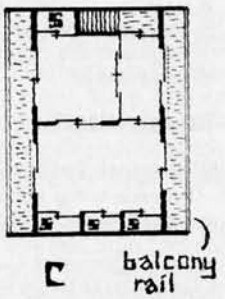
C) The Students Building;
This contains dormitories and a number of apartments for students and staff, as well as ancillary rooms (kitchen, bath, etc.). At any time there will be 4xd5 students at the temple. **Hisakazu**, the Budoka, is the only member of staff whose quarters are in this building; two other apartments have recently been vacated by Shoichi and Yutaka.

D) The Dojo
is a large single story building where martial skills are taught and Kata (excercises) may be performed; sometimes martial training takes place in the temple grounds. In a Tokonoma (alcove) in the main hall is a statue of Gundari-Myoo to remind all students that their martial skills should not be used for evil ends.

E) The Pagoda
contains three halls and a smaller number of rooms for the instruction of students. The representation in the principal hall is of the Amida Buddha. In the other halls are representations of the Jizo Bosatsu in his manifest forms as Jizo of Victory and Jizo of Demons (an exceptionally fine carving in red Jade). The rooms in upper (second) floor are currently occupied by the





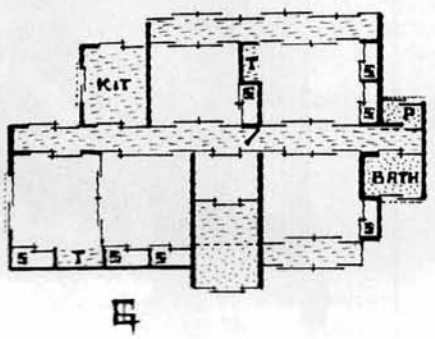


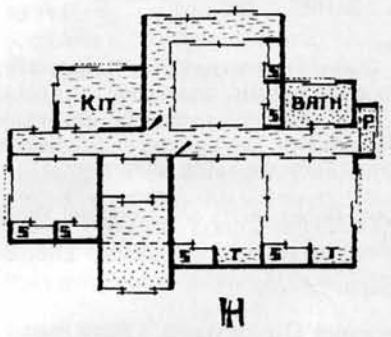
KATSUMUSHI-O-TERA
THE DRAGONFLY TEMPLE

KEY

- WOODEN WALL
- DOUBLE SLIDING DOOR
- SINGLE SLIDING DOOR
- HINGED WOODEN DOOR
- WINDOW
  + WOODEN SHUTTERS
- S STORAGE CUPBOARD
- T TOKONOMA
- P PRIVY
- Kit KITCHEN
- BARE WOOD
- PACKED EARTH

0 5 yards





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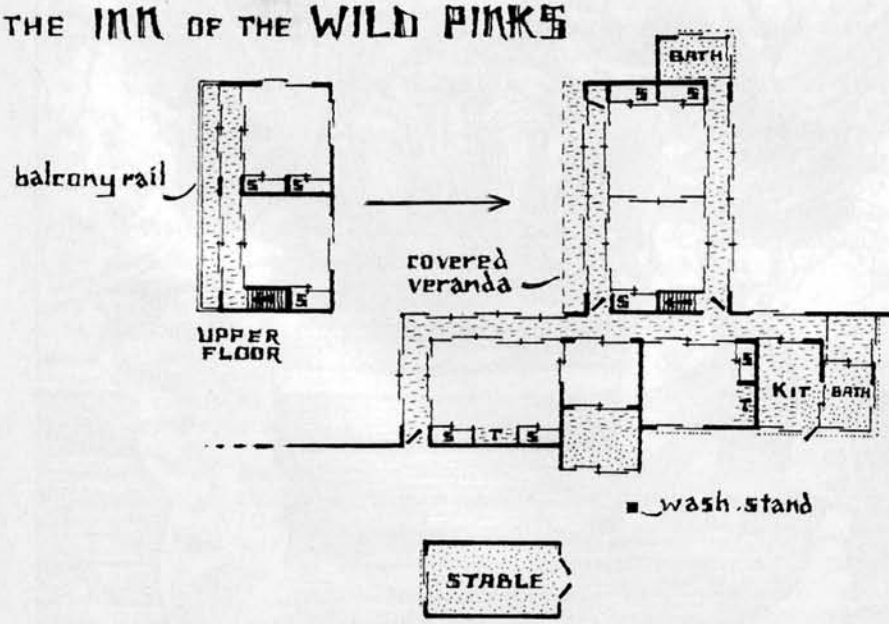

abbot, Hidezumi Tetsuaki.

G) Fujio's House
(currently occupied by Shoichi & Yutaka).

H) Eguchi Ryuchi's House.

(1) Kare-Sansui
garden composed of rocks and sand

(2) Hira-Niwa
(level ground) garden.

(3) Rin-Sen
(forest and water) garden behind; F) is a tea pavillion for the use of both staff and students.

Throughout the temple grounds are small ponds occupied by Turtles and Golden Carp. Because of recent events, the temple grounds are patrolled day and night by 2xd3 Yamabushi, at least one of whom will be Level '2. They will be typically armed with a Wakizashi and a Yari or Naginata; the higher level Yamabushi may have a Katana.

Temple Staff:

·Hidezumi Tetsuaki (level '5 Gakusho)
Tetsuaki is the abbot of Katsumushi-o-Tera, as was his father before him. Due to his age (77) he no longer performs the role of teacher, and devotes himself to spiritual advancement. All administrative duties have fallen to Otake-Sensei and Fujio.

STR	: 6	DAM	: -1	**Capabilities**	MAGIC	: 13
DFT	: 25	BAP	: 12	BRAWL	: 7	POWER	: 84
SPD	: 23	MNA	: 2	CLIMB	: 12	KI	: 9
HLH	: 10	ZAN	: 3	LEAP	: 11		
WIT	: 32	BMA	: 8	SWIM	: 4		
WIL	: 36	HPT	: 18				

Skills:
All yogas (19); Buddhist Theology (19); Chinese classics (19); Meditation (19); Physician (17); Sacred Dance (17); Divination (16);Bojutsu (15); Tea Ceremony (15); Naginata-Jutsu (12);Rhetoric (12); Calligraphy (11)

Armour: Robes (AC1) or Ceremonial Robes (AC2)

Weapons: Bo only

·Terazawa Otake (Level '5 Bushi / Level '2 Gakusho)
Otake-Sensei is the master of martial training in the temple and the commander of the Yamabushi. His elder son, Takeyuji, is also a teacher in the temple and an officer of the Yamabushi.

STR	:27	DAM	: +2	**Capabilities**	MAGIC	: 5
DFT	: 30	BAP	: 15	BRAWL	: 8	POWER	: 34
SPD	: 25	MNA	: 3	CLIMB	: 10	KI	: 3
HLH	: 25	ZAN	: 3	LEAP	: 13		
WIT	: 8	BMA	: 8	SWIM	: 9		
WIL	: 17	HPT	: 48				

Skills:
Kenjutsu (19) with reverse cut Okuden (13); Iaijutsu (19);Ni-to-Kenjutsu (19); Sojutsu (19) with piercing thrust Okuden (12); Sumai (17); Naginata-Jutsu (16); Karma-Yoga (15); Kyu-Jutsu (15); Yadome-Jutsu (15); Chinese Classics (14); Tea ceremony (14); Hawking (12); Senjo-Jutsu (12); Buddhist Theology (11); Hatha-yoga (8)

Armour: Kimono and Hakama (AC1); Samurai Style Armour of AC6 available.

Weapons: Dai-sho (Katana & Wakizashi) normally worn as commander of the Yamabushi; Bokken (used with Kenjutsu, doing damage as a Jo) often carried; No-dach, Yari, Naginata, and Dai-Kyu (3 Man) available

Other Staff :

The remaining six staff are classic members of their stated professions. It is left to the individual referee to decide on the skills of each, and thus on the full range of tuition available in the temple, but the following comments should be noted.

·Fujio (Level 4 Gakusho) has achieved a high standard in his study of the chinese classics and is well versed in the I-Ching; he has lately become involved in the administration of the temple.

·Hisazaku (Level 3 Budoka) specialises in the use of Okinawan weapons.

·Eguchi Ryuchi (Level 4 Bushi) is a master of Onojutsu with smashing blow Okuden.

·Shoichi (Level 3 Gakusho) is noted for his skill in Tenyaku and Igaku.

·Terazawa Takeyuji (Level 3 Bushi / Level 2 Gakusho) was trained in Kenjutsu, Iaijutsu, and Sojutsu by his father, but has lately shown a greater aptitude for religious studies.

·Yutaka (Level 3 Gakusho) is a master of Za-Zen meditation.

Note:
All of the staff will normally wear AC1 robes, gi, or kimono about the temple. Samurai style armour of AC4 or better is available for the Bushi, and all staff will have weapons appropriate to their Bugei. Ryuchi and Hisakazu are pious buddhists.

·Terazawa Suza, Otake-Sensei's Wife
Unknown to all but Otake and the Abbot, Suza-san is, in fact, a (five-tailed) Kitsune. She has been an excellent spouse, and is the mother of Otake's younger son, Takejuni (level '1 Classic Bushi). She has the power of Kitsune-Momoku, and can cast 6 spells of the School of Wood per day as a Shugenja of Level 4. In human form she may fight with Naginata and Tanto, and may use Atemi-waza.

She may betray her true nature by her unusual fondness for Egg-Noodles and fried Tofu, for which Kitsune are notorious, or by her having a shrine (kawi-dana) to Inari, the Shinto god of rice with whom Kitsune are traditionally associated, in her 'private' room in Otake's house.

				Attack	: 18		: 2D6
BAP	: 30	AC	: 3	BiteBCS	: 15	DAM	: +3
MNA	: 3	HPT	: 33	Tanto-Jutsu	: 11	DAM	: +3
ZAN	: 3	BUDO	: 6	Naginata-Jutsu	: 10	DAM	: +3
BMA	: 7			Atemi-Waza	: 13	DAM	
				Magic BCS			

The Adventure:

Recent events at Katsumushi-o-Tera:
Katsumushi-o-Tera is held in high regard throughout northern Honshu. It's presence in the territory of the Kawaguchi Clan and that clan's patronage of the temple have greatly contributed to the prestige of the Kawaguchi.

However, recent events are threatening the standards of the temple and thus the Kawaguchi

clan is in danger of losing face before the other major clans in Dewa province. Due to the sensitive political situation in the province this could have far reaching consequences--perhaps even civil war!

Though more pious than most, the Yamabushi of Katsumushi-o-Tera still enjoy a 'good time' and often frequent the inns and tea houses of nearby villages where, until now, they have always been welcome. In recent months there have been various incidents, such as violent brawls and thefts, involving one member or another of the temple. Most serious of all (and most recent) is the murder of a courtesan of high rank, at the Inn of the Wild Pinks. When questioned, the mama-san was quite adamant that the girl's last customer was a Dragonfly Yamabushi who called himself Kaoru. Fujio has claimed--truthfully! --that there is no-one of that name associated with the temple.

The Inn of the Wild Pinks (see plan)

To lie drunk
on cobbles
bedded in Pinks
-Basho

This inn is run by **Tamiaki**, a Level 2 classic Yakuza Rabble. As the name might suggest (wild pinks are Joro-hana, the courtesan's flowers) the inn can provide the services of a number of geisha. The Mama-San, Kiku, is a Level 3 geisha. There is also a dice game available; the 'croupier' is a female Level 1 Yakuza Rabble, Yoshio. Meals, Tea, Sake', and overnight accomodation are also available at reasonable prices.

Because of recent events, characters who admit to being connected with Katsumushi-o-Tera will not be well received, even if they do claim to be in pursuit of the murderer.

Getting Involved

Because of the killing, the Kawaguchi Clan has decided that it must intercede; (before, they were willing to let the temple deal with the matter). However, to do so openly would humiliate the temple, so any investigation must be covert. To employ Ninja would be distasteful, if not unthinkable, so Kawagushi Takashi has decided to seek the help of free agents. This is (of course) where the player characters may become involved.

When hired, the PCs will be informed by a Kawaguchi 'Hatamoto' that they are to pose as students at the temple while trying to discover the identity of the person(s) responsible for the various crimes. If the PCs are successful in this they should report their findings to a member of the Kawaguchi Clan or, if they think it better, directly to the Temple staff. Their reward from the Kawaguchi for their service should be bountiful and based on the Budo of the criminal(s); the form of the reward should be decided by the referee as Takashi-sama, and may include artifacts.

The PCs will be advised against taking any action against the criminals themselves, unless circumstances dictate otherwise.

For The Referee Only:

The murderer, who is responsible for the other misdemeanors, is also a Tenuki. This creature was once crossed by Terazawa Otake and is now taking his revenge by disgracing the temple and so shaming Otake-Sensei. The Tenuki May cast 5 spells of the School of Earth per day as a Shugenja of Level 3. In human form, he may fight with Sumai.

				Attack			
BAP	: 25	AC	: 3	BiteBCS	: 10	DAM	: 1D6
MNA	: 3	HPT	: 35	2 Claws BCS	: 16	DAM	: 1D6
ZAN	: 2	BUDO	: 5	Sumai	: 10	DAM	: +3
BMA	: 6			Magic BCS	: 11		

The Tenuki has taken the place of a member of the temple; the 'real' NPC has been disposed of. Exactly who it should be is left to the referee; To avoid unnecessary difficulty for the PCs, his identity should be restricted to one of the temple staff. Terazawa's sons are unlikely candidates since Otake's wife, being a shape-shifter herself, could quite easily spot that something was amiss. (However, the Tenuki could have replaced the Kitsune...) Possibly the most likely candidate is the Abbot; his recent withdrawl from everyday affairs would provide cover for an imperfect impersonation.

The referee should make the final decision for himself!. He should, however, remember that the Tenuki is cunning enough to plant evidence to implicate someone else; for example, a (stolen) personal item, such as an 'ori-sen' (fan) or 'netsuke', or something appropriate to someones particular skill, such as yarrow stalks (for I-ching divination). To add insult to injury, the Tenuki may try to implicate one of the Otake-Sensei's sons.

The referee should also bear in mind that the temple will be making its own investigation and suspicious behaviour by the PCs is likely to suggest that they are in league with the murderer! Any claim that they are acting on behalf of the Kawaguchi Clan will be strongly denied by Takashi-Sama.

If the PCs discover Suza-san's true identity but realise that she is not the murderer, she may be willing to help them, but will not do so openly: However,she may come to their defence if they are wrongly accused of complicity. In any event, she may well be acting independantly to avoid her husband losing face.

While the PCs are making their investigation, the referee might have the Tenuki commit some more crimes (again in the guise of an ordinary Yamabushi, and, perhaps, returning to the Inn of the Wild Pinks) to give them some fresh clues to work with. If the PCs are particularly unlucky (or slow witted) and are not making progress, the referee could have them attacked (singly or as a group, depending on their strength) by the Tenuki, who is, after all, a malicious and often unpredictable creature.

If the referee wishes a further complication, it could be that the Abbot is, in Fact, a Tatsu. Or perhaps the Tenuki is Masquerading as a Tatsu in the person of the Abbot....

Enjoy

KATSUMUSHI-O-TERA (Notes for AD&D)

The notes which follow are primarily intended for those DMs who wish to play this scenario but who do not have access to '**Oriental Adventures**', but DMs with 'OA' may still find the suggestions useful. Bear in mind that they are only suggestions; the DM should vary the details as he sees fit.

Character and monster desriptions are provided, together with suggestions about Buddhist Clerics (Gakusho) and Japanese weapon proficiencies. An extensive list of Japanese weapons and armour is also given, with their suggested AD&D stats.

The DM should decide on a suitable reward for the PCs appropriate to his campaign; note that it is likely to include such bulky things as works of art as well as coins and gems, and may include magic items.

Dewa Province and the City of Akita

There is a thieves' Guild in Akita, but criminal activity in the rest of Dewa province is only loosely controlled by various high level Thieves.

The Ninja Clan of the Night Hawks becomes simply (and more prosaically) the (Dewa) Guild of Assassins.

The temples and schools in Akita can be regarded as appropriate places for PCs to complete the training required for level advancement.

The Dragonfly Temple

Temple Troops :

225 1st Level Fighter / 1st Level Cleric (or 1st level Paladin)

75 3rd Level Fighter / 1st Level Cleric (or 3rd level Paladin)

15 5th-6th Level Fighter / 1st-3rd Level Cleric (or 5th-6th level Paladin)

Hidezumi Tetsuaki : 10th Level Cleric

STR : 8	INT : 18
WIS : 18	DEX : 17
CON : 10	CHA : 15
18 H.P.	AC7 (OR 6)

Weapon Proficiencies:

Bo Staff; Naginata (bardiche)

Weapons : Bo Staff

Spells : Cure light wounds, Protection from evil, Remove fear, Augury, Chant, Slow Poison, Cure Blindness, Cure Disease, Dispel Magic, Prayer, Cure Serious Wounds, Divination, Exorcise, Neutralise Poison, Commune, Cure Critical Wounds, Raise Dead, True Seeing, All Appropriate Ceremonies (UA)

If the DM is playing this variation, the Abbot may be a Gold Dragon (MM), or an Oriental Dragon (Pan Lung or T'ien Lung; FF) in human form, rather than a Tatsu.

Terazawa Otake :

10th Level Fighter / 3rd Level Cleric

STR : 18 (01)	INT : 11
WIS : 11	DEX : 18
CON : 17	CHA : 14
45 H.P.	AC6 (or1)

complete light Samurai armour

Weapon Proficiencies : Swords, Yari (spear), Open Hand Attacks (as a monk), Naginata (bardiche), Bows

Weapons : as Bushido description (see appendix), or Bastard Sword, Short Sword, Jo Stick, Two- Handed Swords, Spear, Bardiche, Long Composite Bow

Spells : Cure light wounds, Protection from evil, Remove fear, Augury, Chant

Other Staff

See also the Bushido descriptions

·**Fujio** is a 7th level cleric who always carries 'augury' and 'divination' spells.

·**Hisazaku** is a 5th level monk.

·**Eguchi Ryuchi** is a 7th level fighter who specialises in 'naginata' (halberd) fighting, with a 'to hit/to' damage bonus of 3/3 due to his exceptional skill.

·**Shoichi** a 6th level cleric, can prepare potions of healing.

·**TerazawaTakeyuji**, a 5th level fighter / 3rd level cleric (or 5th level paladin), fights with swords and spear.

·**Yutaka** is a 5th level cleric who, by meditation, can effectively cast 'remove fear' spells on himself.

·**Terazawa Suza**:

Kitsune are fox spirits of Japanese legend (see, for a contemporary example, Tanizaki Junichiro's 'Arrowroot' [Picador]). They are noble (but sometimes cowardly), crafty and whimsical, and renowned as magicians. A complete description is beyond

the scope of these notes.

The nearest official AD&D monster is the foxwoman (MM2; c.f. the werefox in Master D&D), but the werefox in WD19 is somewhat closer to the Bushido monster. Those without access to either of these versions may treat Suza-San as a werewolf (MM) of 24 h.p. and AC8 (AC4 in fox form). However, Kitsune are not true lycanthropes; their shape-changing is not governed by the moon, they may be hit by normal weapons, and they are not affected by wolfsbane. In addition to being able to cast 6 spells (Enchantment/Charm and Illusion/Phantasm) per day as an 8th level MU, Illusionist or, possibly, Houri (WD13; best of WD1), she has the ability (kitsune-momoku) to convince 3 characters [who make checks against the effect of this power as for a charm person spell] that she is absolutely not a fox, despite any evidence to the contrary.

The Inn of the Wild Pinks

The Inn Keeper, Tamiaki, and the Croupier, Yoshio, should be played as a 2nd and 1st Level Thief, repectively.

Tenuki are creatures similar to Kitsune, but coarser, uncouth and often malicious. The animal form is the Badger-like Racoon-dog (nyctereutes procynoides). Again, this creature has no simple equivalent in AD&D, but a full description is not appropriate here. In this scenario, the Tenuki can be played as a Jackalwere (MM) with 29 h.p. and AC8 (AC5 in Jackal form); like the Kitsune, the Tenuki is not a true lycanthrope. Instead of the Jackalwere's 'gaze' attack, he has the ability of Tenuki-Bi (which he may use 5 times per day): by drumming on his distended belly he weaves a 'charm person' spell with which he will lure a character into a dangerous position or location (swamp, precipice, etc; c.f. the behaviour of a will-o-wisp (MM). He may also cast 5 spells (Illusion/Phantasm) per day as a 6th level MU or Illusionist. In human form he fights as a 6th level monk.

1. BUDDHIST GAKUSHO

Buddhist Gakusho are comparatively weaker than most AD&D Clerics, though they have no weapon restrictions, they may use only a limited number of spells (as listed in the character descriptions above).In any case, the description of the spell-like powers of the Gakusho--Yogas, the I-Ching, Za-Zen meditation--in terms of AD&D, clerical spells can only be very approximate. A full description of Buddhist Gakusho as a PC class is beyond the scope of these notes. In general, they should be restricted to using only 'divination', 'abduration' and 'necromantic' spells (but not such spells as animate dead), and ceremonies (Unearthed Arcana). Standard PC Clerics already in the game, worshipping Japanese deities from the DDG (L&L), can be taken to be Shinto Gashuko, to whom the above restrictions may not apply.

These suggestions also apply to the Paladin-like Yamabushi.

2. WEAPON PROFICIENCIES :

In Bushido, a single Bugei (skill) may govern the use of more than one weapon, thus, Kenjutsu allows the use of Wakizashi, Katana, and No-Dachi. This has been assumed in the AD&D descriptions above, hence a weapon proficiency of 'swords' would allow the use of 'short, bastard, and two-handed' swords (there is no Nipponese equivalent of the long sword). This useage should be restricted to a Japanese campaign, where the same fighting technique is used with all swords, which is not the case with 'European' weapons in AD&D. Iaijutsu (a fast draw technique) gives the initiative in the first round of a sword fight, if weapons are sheathed beforehand. Ni-to-Kenjutsu allows fighting with two swords (bastard and short) at no penalty. (Both these skills count as seperate weapon proficiencies).

Since many Bushi had some unarmed-combat skill (eg. atemi-waza, sumai) which used hand blows, fighters in a Japanese campaign should be allowed open hand attacks (as a monk of the same level, and attacking on the monk's Combat Matrix) as one weapon proficiency.

Nipponese Weapons and Armour in AD&D

Weapons :

The following list is meant only as a guide. The DM should feel free to alter any details as he sees fit. If he would rather simply substitute the AD&D counterparts of the Bushido weapons, he may follow the suggestions given in Graeme Davis's 'Bujutsu' (WD43), or see his 'Japanese Bujutsu' (Imagine 25).

Sword	Katana	No-Dachi	Wakizashi
Weight (gp)	50	80	30
Space Req.	3'	4'	2'
Speed Factor	3'	5'	2'
AC adj as a/	3	6	2
Dam S or M-L	Bastard/	/Sword/	/Broad/
	3-10	2-16	1-8
	3-14	2-20	1-10

Swords in Nippon have blades of varying quality:

01-20%	Poor	−1/−1 hit/to damage
21-80%	Average	−/−
81-92%	Good	+1/+1
93-98%	Superior	+2/−2
99-00%	Master	+3/+3

N.B. These bonuses are due to the quality of the blade only, they are not magical!

The price of an average sword should be about three times as much as its AD&D equivalent; the price of other blades should correspond to their quality and rarity.

Scabbards are often works of art in their own right; they should be priced accordingly

Bow Classes: **Dai-Kyu** (asymmetric Longbow)

Han Kyu (Short Bow)

Dai-Kyu	1 Man	2 Man	3 Man	4 Man
Strength Rating:	10 or Less	11-15	16-18	18 (01) or more
Range: (SML)	20-70-160	30-80-170	40-90-180	50-100-190
Attack:	0	+1	+2	+3
Damage:	Std	2[x]	3[x]	4[x]

Han-Kyu	1 Man	2 Man	3 Man
Strength Rating:	15 or Less	16-18	18(01) or more
Range: (SML)	20-50-110	30-60-120	40-70-130
Attack:	0	+	−
Damage:	Std	2[x]	3[x]

The *Dai-kyu* and *Han-Kyu* should have the armour class adjustments of long and short composite bows respectively.

Arrow:	Damage:	Armour Type Adjustment:
Hike me (humming bulb)	1D3	none (hums inflight; used for signalling)
Togari ya (armour pierce)	1D4	+2v. light ashigaru/samurai or ninja armour +1 v. heavy ashigaru/samurai armour
Watakushi (bowel raker)	2D4	−2v. light ashigaru/samurai or ninja armour −4v. heavy ashigaru/samurai armour
Yanagi ba (willow leaf)	1D6	NONE

Togari - ya and Watakushi are available for the Dai - Kyu. The armour type adjustments are in addition to the armour class adjustments for the bow.

Weapons:

	Wt. (gp)	Lth Reqd:	Space Factor:	Speed: 1	AC Adj as a:	Dam: Sor ML
Aiguchi[a]	5	1'	1		Dagger	1-4 1-3
Naginata	120	7'	7'	6	Bardiche	2-1 6 1-20
Ono	200	4.5'	5'	6	Halberd	2.16 1-20
Shuriken[b]	-	-	as	darts	-	- -
Tanto[a]	10	1'	1'	1	Dagger	1-6 1-6
Tesubo	250	6'	4'	5	Mace	2-12 2-16
Yari	100	6'	2'	6	Spear	1-10 1-12

a) These weapons may be hurled; treat just as daggers.

b) Shuriken may be simple metal spikes or many-pointed stars; Both types should be treated as darts in AD&D. They were often poisoned.

These weapons should have similar prices to their AD&D equivalents.

Some of these weapons could, like swords, be of variable quality, but not better than 'superior' (2).

ARMOUR DESCRIPTION:

Bushido	Bushido AC	AD&D AC
Naked; underwear	0	10
Peasant or Samurai garb; Buddhist Robes	1	10
Ninja Garb, Winter Clothes Samurai Court Clothes Ceremonial Clothes	2	9
Partial Light Ashigaru or Samurai Armour	3	8
Light Ashigaru or Samurai Armour Partial Ninja Armour	4	7
Partial Heavy Ashigaru or Samurai Armour	5	6
Heavy Ashigaru or Complete Light Samurai Armour Ninja Armour	6	5
Heavy Samurai or Complete Ninja Armour	7	4
Complete Heavy Samurai Armour	8	3
Superior Heavy Samurai Armour	9	2
Master Heavy Samurai Armour	10	1

Samurai Armour should be priced similarly to the (dearest) AD&D equivalent; Light armour does not reduce movement, Heavy armour reduces movement to 9'.

Ashigaru armour is cheaper but more cumbersome, Light and Heavy armour reducing movement to 9' and 6'.

Superior and Master Samurai armour should be be priced as 1 and 2 plate; Note that they are not magical, the bonuses being due solely to the quality of the armour (c.f. swords, above).

Ninja armour is available only to Ninja. Complete Ninja armour is similar (in function, if not in form) to 'elfin' chain.

LONDON 1925. CHURCHILL HAS JUST REVALUED THE POUND. MOSELEY IS BLAMING THE JEWS FOR THE DEPRESSION. AND ORDINARY MADNESSES STALK THE SLEEP OF ORDINARY FOLK.
BUT ON THIS STREET, MORE DANGEROUS EXTREMISTS THAN THE FASCIST MOSELEY ARE AWAKE...
WHIPLASH
WRITTEN BY WARREN ELLIS.
ILLUSTRATED BY STEWART (STAZ) JOHNSON.
AND LESS ORDINARY MADNESSES SPRING FROM THE DARK.
FACING SUCH INSANITY IS SOMETHING FAMILIAR TO THIS MAN - DENNY WHIPLASH.
STAZ. '86.

BLAM!
YAAAH
UUURRGH
HARRY, CASSANDRA – LOOKS LIKE WE'VE SMOKED THEM OUT.
I PRESUME WE'RE GOING IN THERE?
CERTAINLY HOPE SO. SEE THIS THING OUT TO THE BITTER END AND ALL THAT.
LOOKS TOO DANGEROUS FOR US TO TACKLE ALL ON OUR OWN. ARE WE SURE THEY'RE IN THERE?
AS SURE AS WE CAN BE.
DENNY! STEADY ON! HOLD UP!
ABRUPTLY, WHIPLASH STEPS INTO THE LIVING DARKNESS...
...AND THROUGH INTO A VISION FAR REMOVED FROM ANY LONDON ALLEYWAY
LOOKS LIKE WE COULD BE IN TIME, TOO.

...AND 'TIS TO YOU, OUR DREAD LORD CH'KAT, IMPRISONED IN THIS BLADE, WE DEDICATE THIS SACRIFICE, SO THAT THIS VIRGIN SOUL MAY FREE YOU...
NO!
KREESH
THE KNIFE! WITHOUT THE SACRIFICE...
DENNY? WHAT HAPPENED?
...WE WERE RIGHT. THEY WERE TRYING TO FREE THE DEMON CH'KAT, WHICH HAD BEEN TRAPPED IN A KNIFE FOR MILLENIA...
I SMASHED THE KNIFE. WITHOUT THE POWER OF THE SACRIFICED SOUL, HE COULDN'T EXIST IN THE MATERIAL WORLD.
BUT THE ATZLAN CULT WILL FIND OTHERS OF THE OLD RACE, AND TRY TO FREE THEM.
AND WE'LL BE THERE.
NEXT - THE SHADOW ON THE SKY

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CULTS of CTHULHU

The WHY, WHAT and HOW of creating cults

by A. J. Bradbury

Why do we need cults in CoC scenarios? With a more than generous list of fearsome creatures culled from the works of H. P. Lovecraft and others for investigators to battle against, surely these purely human foes are little more than slightly irrelevant icing on the cake - or are they?

CULTS - WHY?

Human cultists, both individually and in groups, constitute a natural development of the Cthulhu Mythos. It is true that Lovercraft himelf seldom made use of such characters in his stories. With the exception of the Order of Dagon, with its HQ in Innsmouth, he usually wove his plots around a single, insane worshipper rather than a group.

However, a CoC scenario is seldom, if ever based upon a single story. Indeed, there are few short stories which could, by themselves, provide enough material for anything more than a solo adventure. Quite naturally, then, most scenarios are based upon the Cthulhu Mythos as a whole - and the aim of scenario writers (professional and amateur) is to give a general feeling of the menace and terror which surrounds the Mythos rather than trying to be absolutely faithful to any particular story line.

Having said that, it is also worth repeating the oft-made point about Lovecraft's original stories, namely: the 'heroes' seldom go back for a second helping - usually because they are either dead, insane, or at least so terrified that they find it difficult to live with the small details of the Mythos they have stumbled across. With the exception of Randolph Carter I can't, offhand, think of a single non-Cthuloid character who appears, in person, in more than one story.

There is, then, an important dividing line between Lovecraft's stories and the CoC RPG. Lovecraft was primarily concerned with the creatures of the Mythos and the threat that they presented to mankind. On this basis he made the creatures as large, as terrible and as destructive as they needed to be in order to achieve the desired impressions upon the reader. His own investigators were, in a sense, merely cannon-fodder provided to heighten this impression. But not many CoC players will derive much satisfaction from having their characters wiped out, or at least driven hopelessly insane, every time they go off on an adventure.

Which brings us to the WHY of including cultists within scenarios and campaigns.

In the first place they act as stand-ins for the creatures of the Mythos. This is not to say that real monsters can't or shouldn't be included as well. But isn't it just as easy, and far more realistic, to have human investigators battling against human adversaries (or Deep Ones, ghouls, etc.) with the usually indestructable Cthuloid monsters lurking in the background - unseen but 'sensed' at every turn? It seems to me that any group which claims to be able to confront Cthonians, Dimensional Shamblers, and even Great Cthulhu itself - time after time - without ever suffering more than a few relatively superficial wounds must either be exceptionally lucky in their dice rolls, or has relegated these creatures to the level of The Creature from the Black Lagoon!

But cultists don't only even up the odds in favour of the investigators. They can also be used to give a sense of continuity from one scenario to the next.

All of the groups described in **The Cults of the Dark Gods** have actually existed at one time or another. Prof. Archensbak's facts are true, as far as anyone knows - though his particular interpretation of those facts is open to question. It is not difficult, then, to imagine that there just might be a secret organisation working on an international scale for some nefarious ends, though it assumes different indentities in different countries. (Please note - I'm not saying that such an organisation does, or ever did, exist, only that it is easy to imagine its existence.) By applying this idea to a series of scenarios, even though they do not make up a single campaign as such, the Keeper can lead his investigators, or mislead them, by introducing clues which seem to suggest that 'they' (The Brotherhood of the Knot, The Hermitic Order of the Silver Twilight, or whoever) are behind the events under investigation. This enables the Keeper to build up a much stronger storyline without having to develop every game 'from scratch.'

CULTS - WHAT?

A cult, according to one dictionary definition, is simply: "A system of religious belief and the rites and ceremonies attendant on that belief." In practice, however, we usually tend to think of cults as being somewhat different from the main religions, either because they are splinter groups from an 'orthodox' religion (the Assassins, for example), because they involve certain secret teachings, or because they stand outside the normal stream of religious beliefs. Some Cthuloid cults could fit under all three headings, but the last two are particularly relevant.

In the CoC rulebook we find that, of the three categories of Deities and Monsters listed, most cults relate to either the Outer Gods or the Greater Old Ones - plus the Great Race of Yith. And just as each creature has different characteristics, so each cult will follow different purposes and forms.

Among the Outer Gods only **Nodens** has no known cult, possibly because he appears to be at odds with the other gods - especially **Azathoth** and **Nyarlathotep** - and is therefore unlikely to offer worshippers the same destructive powers that cult members usually seek. All of the other gods, and the Great Old Ones have cult followings with the exception of **Cthugha** (who has no cult), and **Azathoth** who is only worshipped by individuals. The reason for the 'singular' nature of Azathoth's worshippers is said to be because "Only the pathologically insane would worship such a being", yet none of the other gods or old ones are exactly attractive. It seems much more likely that Azathoth's tendency to destroy everyone in sight when called on has led to the swift extinction of any organised groups before they have time to become firmly established.

Of all the other beings who have attracted cults, Nyarlathotep is probably the most widely worshipped, though since none of them are dedicated to Nyarlathotep as such we may safely assume that each group worships a different facet of the god, and has its own peculiar set of reasons and objectives upon which that worship is founded.

Which brings us neatly to the question of how a Keeper might go about the job of setting out the details of a particular cult.

CULTS - HOW?

Given the nature of some of the misguided accusations levelled against RPG's in general let me start by saying that a Keeper does NOT need to have any cult knowledge at all in order to create a cult for use in CoC scenarios. What he or she will need to decide before anything else is: 'What is the purpose of the proposed cult?' This will be the basis for deciding what entity the cult will be dedicated to, and will be determined, to a certain extent, by the nature of the members of the cult.

I've already mentioned that Nyarlathotep is one of the most popular of the cult deities, and for this reason alone you might well decide to go for some other being for a change. In the list below I've tried to outline as briefly as possible the reasons for selecting a particular Mythos character as a cult focus.

AZATHOTH - An unlikely choice for the reasons given above and in the ruleook.

NYARLATHOTEP - Can appear to cult members/take part in cult ceremonies in human form. Has the power to impart advanced scientific knowledge and/or assign members of any of the alien races and monsters as cult servants. Particularly attractive to cults seeking worldly power.

SHUB-NIGGURATH - A fertility goddess (?) with particular appeal to backward peoples in remote places such as jungles, backwoods areas, etc. Unlikely to be encountered in an urban setting unless one or more of her followers have come to town with a travelling show such as a circus.

YOG-SOTHOTH - Has particular appeal to those seeking arcane knowledge and, in more modern times, groups interested in flying saucers and similar phenomena. May reward followers with the gift of a piece of glass through which they can see into other dimensions, though such a gift can have its drawbacks (see GLASS FROM LENG, Rulebook p. 74).

GREAT CTHULHU - Primarily worshipped by those who believe that Cthulhu will one day re-awaken and rule over a world dominated by its followers. Like Shub-Niggurath is most popular amongst backward/primitive tribes and particularly the Deep Ones and their 'human' relations.

HASTUR - Cult ceremonies involve many unspeakable practices amongst which blood sacrifices and cannabilism are the most common. Has its roots in the seldom-visited parts of Central Asia but may be brought back to the West by travellers in that area who have fallen foul of, for example, the Tcho-Tcho tribe.

SHUDDE M'ELL - Though normally only found amongst tribesmen in the East Indies the worship of this being might be uncovered by anyone making a definitive study of the druids of ancient Britain. Probably only found in the West as small groups of not more than half-a-dozen people with a grudge against society.

TSATHOGGUA - Another favourite amongst those seeking arcane knowledge. This being's main gifts to its followers are the ability to cast spells and to create 'gates' for long distance/interdimensional travel.

Y'GOLONAC - Like Nyarlathotep this being has the power to appear in human form. Nevertheless he is more likely to be worshipped by individuals who have delved into texts such as the Revelations of Glaaki. Beware of flabby academics bearing strange ideas!

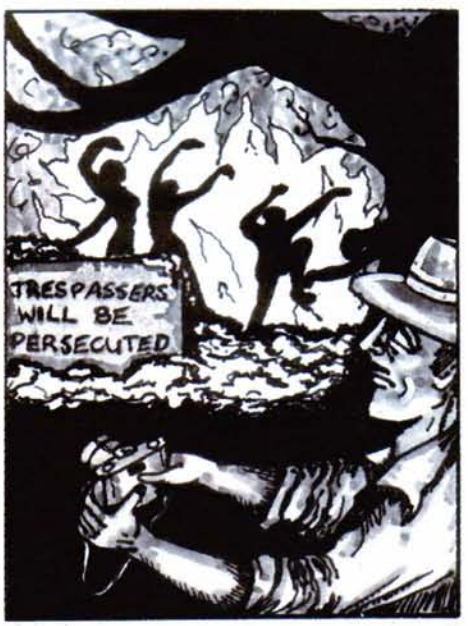
YIG - Known as the 'Father of Serpents' this creature is generally worshipped by native tribes in Central (and South?) America and the Caribbean. Cultists will usually have the power to defend themselves by calling up deadly snakes and/or Cthonians.

These are the central creatures of the Cthulhu Mythos who might lurk, in person, at the climax of an investigation. But their followers will seldom reveal themselves in their true colours to an outsider. Cthulhu cults will usually be hidden behind a facade of some kind, especially those which have taken root in an urban setting.

A cult of **Hastur** worshippers might, for example, be recruited from among the members of an explorers' club. Their cover would be monthly private suppers during which they (allegedly) discuss their exploits and plan future expeditions. The cult would probably be exposed if their rituals become excessive - almost inevitable sooner or later - of if they make away with a reputable if slightly shabby citizen, mistaking him for vagrant.

A cult of **Shudde M'ell** or **Y'golonac** followers, on the other hand, are more likely to be found in an academic setting - private school or a university, for instance. Alternatively they might be using a group of modern druids as a 'front'. Such a group would be more difficult to detect unless they performed some overtly destructive action or if the investigators uncover the cult's headquarters, full of arcane texts, etc.

Finally, in the cause of greater realism, the Keeper should hide clues to the identity of the creature being worshipped by a particular person or cult in the earlier stages of a scenario. This not only introduces an element of detective work into the game but also gives the investigators some chance to prepare themselves for the final confrontation rather than depending on some hasty, last-minute dice rolling.



HOW CULTS WORK
by Pete Tamlyn

Players in Call of Cthulhu encounter cultists with about the same frequency that players of fantasy games encounter orcs. They are the standard enemy. Unfortunately it often turns out that cultists in CoC behave just like orcs as well, i.e. they are portrayed as crazed, murderous loonies who attack on sight with no thought for tactics or their own survival. Well, as the saying goes, cultists are real people too. This article suggests a slightly more calculated (if equally insane) mode of behaviour.

I intend to deal here with cults in "civilised" countries only. Cults operating amongst primitvie tribesmen may well have just as sophisticated a structure and, in their own way, be equally as cunning, but the organisation will be quite different. Also I will only deal with a large, established cult. Smaller cults with much fewer layers will also exist. The sort of cult described below could be found in any "western" country from the 18th Century onwards. Indeed, many are still active today...

The thing that cults strive most to avoid is publicity. Of course the general public is unlikely to believe tales of Cthulhu and co. even if they are splashed all over the **News of the World**, but many senior cultists are prominent men and women whos social standing could be severely damaged by stories along the lines of "MP in Naked Magical Sex Rite." Because of this, most cults are organised according to the Onion Skin Principle; only those at the very centre of the cult get to know what is really going on.

There are stages that an initiate goes through as his membership progresses and he discovers more about the organisation he has joined:

Level 1:

The Friendly Society

The basic level, and the only one known to the public at large, is the Friendly Society. Nowadays such things are something of an anachronism in Britain, but before the advent of the Welfare State they performed a vital service to the community. The normal means of operation was that the members paid a regular subscription in return for which the Society agreed to pay a pension to any member who became unable to work due to sickness. Some societies would also pay medical fees, unemployment benefit and so on.

As you can see, at this level the cult may well be doing a lot of good work. Whilst this is obviously abhorent to any true servant of the Mythos forces, it does have its uses. Firstly it is a very respectable cover behind which to hide a cult. Second, the operation can be run

at a profit which is creamed off to finance the cult's secret activities. Finally it gives the cult a huge membership from which to recruit its more senior members. Perhaps the leaders may even plan to use this huge membership as a source of POW for a really powerful spell.

Level 2: The Philosophical Brotherhood

Those members who enquire about the origins of the Society will be told that it began as a Philosophical Brotherhood which can trace its ancestry back through history. There will probably be some story about how the members were persecuted by kings and popes for their political or religious beliefs. The exact nature of the story changes depending on the sort of person the cult is trying to recruit. Members are told that the Society has continued its secretive traditions "just in case" and, if they are found suitable, they can be initiated. It is all made to sound intriguing and probably great fun.

Suitability in this case is judged largely socially. The society may only accept male initiates, or only people with a certain level of income. These restrictions may relate to the real cult practices, but are more likely to be designed to appeal to the prejudices of the sort of people the cult wants to recruit. Normally all a candidate for initiation has to do is get sponsored by two existing members.

The initiation ceremony itself will be largely play-acting. There is no serious magic involved unless a senior magician needs POW urgently. Also the whole thing will, at least until the 1960's, have overt Christian trappings so as to avoid any suspicion of scandal. Nevertheless at some point during the ceremony the initiate will be required to perform some innocent seeming sequence of actions, perhaps including a seemingly nonsensical chant, which irrevocably binds him to the service of the cult's True Master.

Level 3: The Mystical brotherhood

Once initiated the member will discover some of the 'secrets' of the Brotherhood. Perhaps to his surprise he will discover that it has profound mystical leanings. It will claim famous alchemists such as **Francis Bacon** and **John Dee** as members. He will also be told that there are many grades within the society and he will be encouraged to try to gain promotion by promises of further esoteric knowledge and, perhaps more important at this stage, authority within the society.

In order to prove his worthiness the member may be given tasks to perform. Can he master the secret cypher? Can he perform a clandestine mission? Can he function as leader of a group of uninitiated members? Can he recruit new initiates? As well as giving the member the impression that whatever promotion he is seeking is worthwhile (because it is quite hard to get), these tests are an invaluable sorting out process by which the leaders of the cult decide how the initiates will progress.

Many unpromising members get no further than this level. They will either remain as ordinary initiates, vainly recruiting further members in an attempt to gain the desired promotion, or will be shunted into seemingly important, but actually peripheral, posts such as Branch Secretary or Treasurer. Such people often work very hard for the cult, raising money and boosting membership without ever having the slightest inkling of what they are working towards.

Level 4: The Magical Brotherhood

The more capable members are quickly moved on into seemingly unimportant posts. Such positions are carefully chosen so as to avoid upsetting the duped 'officials' and give the members promoted to them the opportunity to progress in secret. They have reached level 4 at which they learn real esoteric secrets. These will include such things as ancient magical systems (e.g. the Qabbalah) but no real magic as yet. It will, however, be made plain that these systems do work and that the cult's leaders do perform magic. A small demonstration may be arranged to prove this.

The initiate is also put through much more rigorous testing, both psychological and practical. This is almost certain to involve breaking the law at some point. The member will have been carefully chosen so that there is little chance of his baulking at this, and the cult will soon have the means of blackmailing him into doing what he is told if he ever shows signs of doubt. Once he has proved himself in this way there will be a second initiation into the secret Inner Order.

Level 5: Real Magic

The ceremony for admission to level 5 will involve some actual magic and will bind the members much more fully to the cult, perhaps by branding him with some secret mark as well as by magical means. nevertheless it will still retain many Christian trappings, albeit somewhat heretical ones.

The initate now begins to learn real magic. He starts with very simple stuff such as hypnotism, yoga and the use of drugs, progressing later to basic spells like **enchanting** and **Voorish** and **Elder signs.** He also discovers that there are many grades of adeptitude which he will need to climb before he can do anything really spectacular. The only members who get this far will either be those with very strong magical potential or those whose overwhelming ambition will ensure that they strive to master their lessons and progress as fast as possible.

Level 6: The Cult Of A Forgotten God

Once the initiate has mastered sorcery well enough to take part in major rituals at which invocations are necessary he must move on to Level 6. At this point it is admitted to him that the veneer of Christianity was simply a front designed to avert suspicion. Instead he will be told that the cult's power is derived from **Pan, Mithras, Osiris,** or perhaps some little known African deity. The God chosen will probably be a figure whom the cult's True Master can at least impersonate, but the awful truth remains hidden. If the initiate has doubts at this stage it will be pointed out to him that it is too late for that; he has already sold his soul.

level 7: The Mythos Cult

There are good reasons for the final level of deceit. Firstly the true awesomeness of Mythos deities is likely to be too much even for the most hardened cultist. The threat to his sanity may cause him to risk all and expose the cult. Besides, what sane man wouldn't baulk at the fact that the Mythos deities have no regard whatsoever for mankind, indeed that they intend to exterminate it. No, not until the cultist is truely insane will he reach level 7 and learn the truth about the deity he serves.

— Beyond The Facade —

by A. J. Bradbury

Cults, as we have just discovered, are an important part of the **Call of Cthulhu** game. A. J. Bradbury here describes a sample cult, suitable for inclusion in any campaign, or for a one-off use in an adventure.

The following introduction is in the form of a letter, which can either be posted to the players by an aquaintance/friend of the PCs. In this case, it should be signed by the relevant NPC.

Alternatively, the letter may be discovered on the body of a mutilated corpse, and delivered to the party to investigate the cause of death. Other clues directing them to either Danby or the Far Eastern Club should be made available.

My dear friends,

I must caution you about the strangeness of a man whom we both know. ***Peter Danby*** *has recently returned from his extended visit to the Thibetan remoteness. On his return, he has brought with him a short, rather sinister-looking native called* ***Dalkashali****, whom Danby refers to as his personal butler.*

We both know that Danby is a member of the ***Far Eastern Club****, and indeed have both conversed with him there. But his recent visits have seen Danby preaching an eastern philosophy of a sect which he claims exists deep in the Himalayas-****The Friends Of The Monastery Of Light****. Curious to discover what this was all about, I attended one of their meetings. In it, after a frenzied speech by the charismatic Danby, there was a vague promise that the members would be assisted with a physical assault on any business rival they feel threatened by. Now that strikes me as being rather unusual, and when added to all the mumbo-Jumbo about secular deities and eastern gods, I begin to doubt the sanity and intent of Danby and his ever-present sidekick.*

Keeper: What is really happening is that Danby (once a hard-eyed, clean cut explorer) was captured by a group of **Tcho-Tcho** tribesmen (including Dalshakali), and driven insane by their unspeakable tortures. He is now completely under Dalshakali's control. His facade of sanity is maintained by regular doses of a potion derived from the leaves of the **Bourelisganathia** plant, administered daily by the native. Without this drug, he would be reduced to a gibbering wreck in 10 to 12 hours.

The Far Eastern Club is frequented by middle-aged explorers and traders. Many members are rich enough to help fund expeditions to remote areas of the world, yet have themselves never ventured further than Monte Carlo.

Danby is attempting to recruit members for the sect under Dalkashali's direction, laying the foundation for a cult of **Hastur** worshippers. The statuette which presides over the sect's meetings is a figurine of Hastur partially concealed with pieces of mirror (actually the segments of a 'Glass from Leng'). Once he has recruited a half dozen members, local tramps will be abducted and killed to be cooked (according to certain unspeakable Tcho - Tcho rituals), and served up as 'Llhasa Lamb' at the sect's monthly dinners. From this point on, the development of the cult will depend on the plot of the scenario or campaign in which it appears. The Tcho-Tcho native and his human puppet may simply be seeking fellow worshippers to take part in their loathsome rituals, using blackmail (over the cannibalistic feasts), or the promise of services of byakhee to attack members' business rivals, etc. On the other hand, 'they' may have something very much worse in mind, including the summoning of Hastur himself via the Glass of Leng! Any cult members attempting to escape the strongholds of Hastur will suffer the same fate as the victim in the opening paragraph-agonising death at the claws of a demon of retribution, such as the servile Byakhee.

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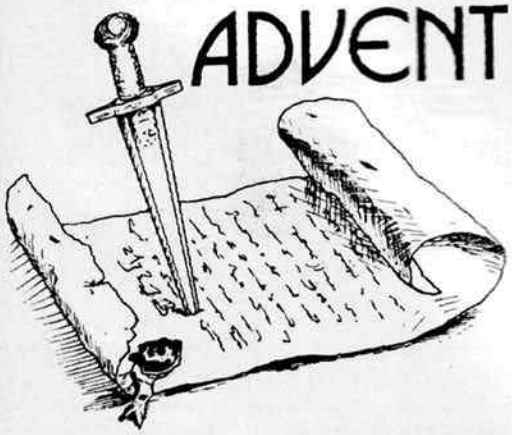

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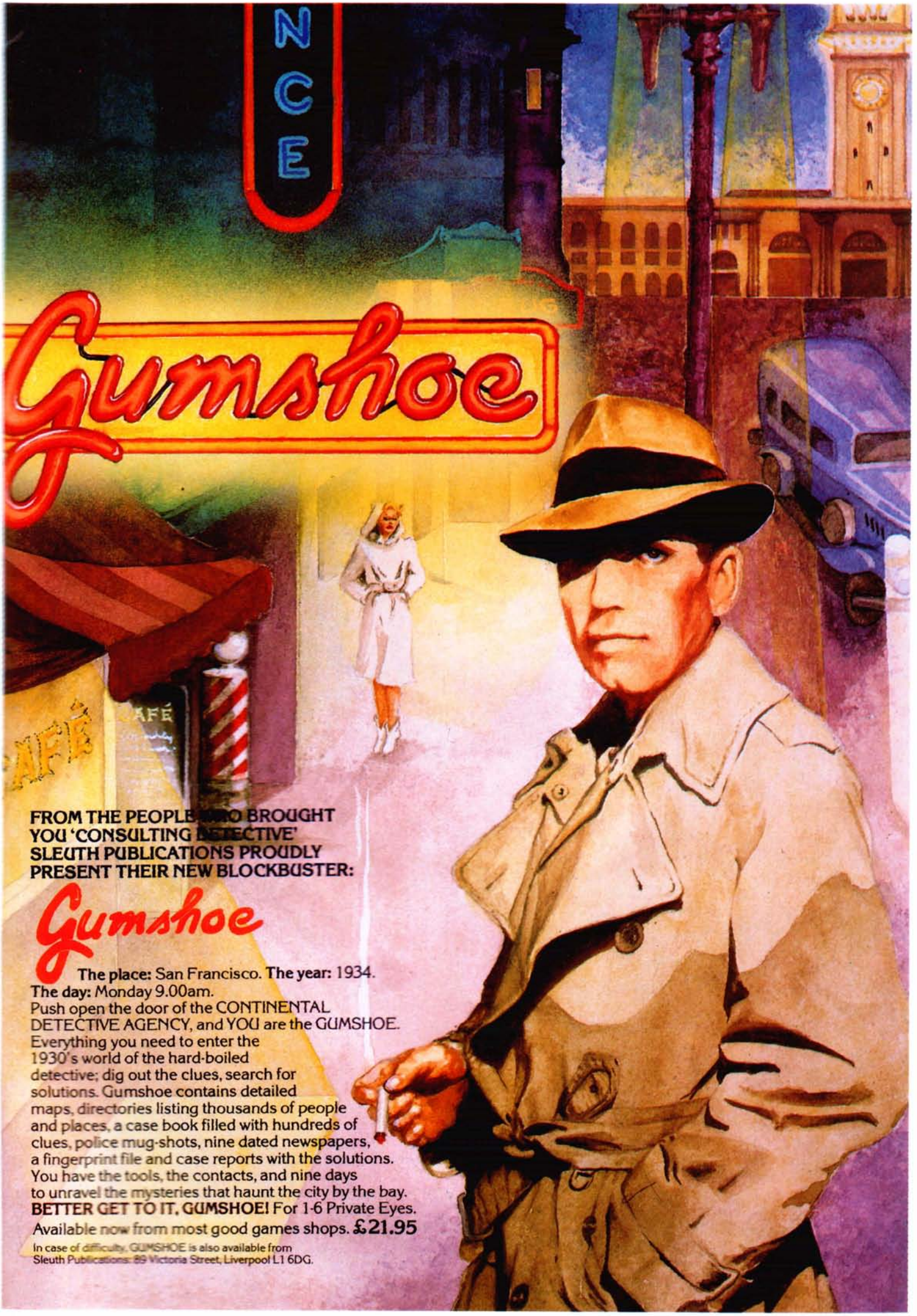

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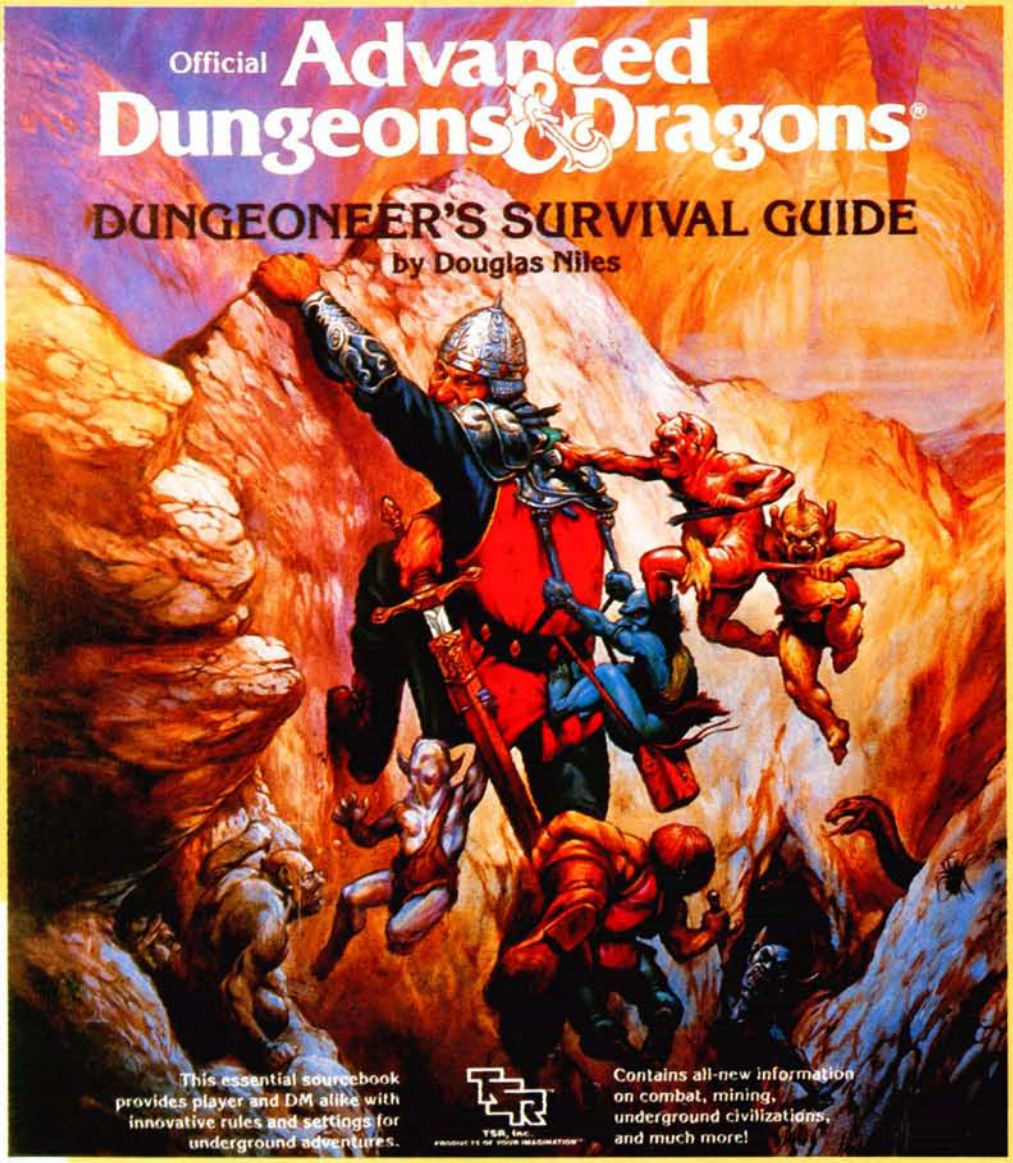
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